



Historic Preservation Commission

Regular Meeting

<http://www.townofboone.net/>

~ Agenda ~

Jane Shook
828-268-6960

Tuesday, April 4, 2023

3:00 PM

WebEx

This meeting will be held using video conferencing software (WebEx).

For information on how to watch, listen, and/or participate in the meeting, please see the WebEx Video Conferencing Information section at the end of this agenda.

I. Call to Order

II. Adoption of Agenda

III. Approval of Minutes

February 7, 2023 Meeting Minutes

March 7, 2023 Meeting Minutes

IV. Public Comment

V. HPC Intern Landmark Report Update

R.L. Clay/Rivers House Local Landmark Report - Draft

VI. Fieldstone Line at Boone Cemetery - Update on JHA Project

VII. Staff Update

Hayes-Bryan-Greene Cemetery Historical Marker

Interpretative Panel Examples (Boone Cemetery Interpretative Panel Project)

Interpretative Panel Examples - NPS and Civil War Trails Panels

SHPO Certified Local Government Orientation

Appendix D Revisions

Statement of Conformity Report

VIII. HPC Member Updates

IX. May Advisory Session Material

X. Other Discussion

XI. Adjournment

WATCH OR PARTICIPATE IN THE MEETING: Individuals who wish to give testimony/evidence with respect to this case may do so through WebEx either online (by computer or smartphone) or by telephone. To do so, please email Jessica Mitchell, Long-Range/Special Projects Planner at jessica.mitchell@townofboone.net or call 828-268-6960 and you will be provided with an email invitation to the meeting. All requests for participation must be completed by 2 pm on the day of the meeting.

Staff will be happy to schedule a test meeting with each participant to ensure that they are able to participate the day of the meeting. Please call Jessica Mitchell at 828-268-6960 if you are interested in this option.

Staff will moderate the WebEx session to ensure all participants have an opportunity to speak. Individuals who require user assistance registering or joining the WebEx event on the day/night of the meeting can call 828-268-6960 for support.

CONCERNS REGARDING PARTICIPATION: Please contact Jessica Mitchell, Long-Range/Special Projects Planner by phone at 828-268-6960 as soon as possible if you are concerned about your ability to participate through the options listed above (online or by telephone) in the "Watch or participate in the meeting" section above.

**TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 7, 2023, 3:00 p.m.
WebEx Video Conferencing**

Historic Preservation Commission Members in Attendance:

Chair Eric Plaag, Vice-Chair Bettie Bond, Chuck Watkins, and James Sharp

Council Liaisons: Virginia Roseman

Town Staff in Attendance:

Jessica Mitchell-Long-Range/Special Projects Planner, Marlene Crosby-Board Secretary, Christy Turner-Senior Planner, Mark Freed-Director of Cultural Resources and Paige Henderson-Downtown Boone Development Coordinator

Others in Attendance: Amber Bateman-Director of the Watauga County Arts Council, Ellie McCorkle-HPC Intern, Mike and Amy Forrester-Business Owners at 260 Howard Street and Watauga County Arts Council Board of Directors, and Jodie Feimster

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Eric Plaag called the Boone Historic Preservation Commission meeting via WebEx to order at 3:01 p.m.

Chair Plaag asked the HPC and Staff to introduce themselves. He asked the guests to identify themselves to let him know whether they were at the meeting for public comment or to speak about a particular item on the agenda.

Chair Eric Plaag introduced himself as the HPC Chair, Vice-Chair Bettie Bond introduced herself as the HPC Vice-Chair, and Member Chuck Watkins and Member James Sharp introduced themselves as HPC members.

Chair Plaag asked the Staff to introduce themselves. Ms. Christy Turner introduced herself as a Senior Planner, and Ms. Jessica Mitchell introduced herself as a Long-Range/Special Projects Planner and Staff Liaison to the HPC. Ms. Paige Henderson introduced herself as the Downtown Boone Development Coordinator (DBDA) and the person who oversees the DBDA. Council Member Virginia Roseman introduced herself as a Town Council Member and the Council Liaison to the HPC. Chair Plaag introduced Ms. Marlene Crosby, the Board Secretary for the HPC.

Chair Plaag asked the guests to introduce themselves. Ms. Amber Bateman introduced herself as the Executive Director of the Watauga Arts Council. Ms. Ellie McCorkle introduced herself as the Project Coordinator for Digital Watauga, and as the person who is writing up the Rivers Clay House Designation Report. Ms. Amy Forrester introduced herself as a member of the Board of Directors of the Watauga Arts Council. She said that she and Mr. Mike Forrester represented the property owners of 260 Howard Street, the building being considered for placing the Doc and Merle Watson mural.

Chair Plaag confirmed with Ms. Bateman that she and Mr. and Mrs. Forrester were at the meeting to speak on an agenda item, not separately in Public Comment. Ms. Bateman confirmed that she and Mr. and Mrs. Forrester were at the meeting to speak on an agenda item.

Chair Plaag asked if anyone else intended to speak in Public Comment or specifically on an agenda item. No other individuals requested to speak in either Public Comment or on a specific agenda item.

Communication: February 7, 2023 Meeting Minutes (Approval of Minutes)

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Vice-Chair Bond made a motion, seconded by Member Watkins, to adopt the agenda as presented.

Vote: Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Plaag made the following corrections to November 8, 2023, meeting minutes:

- Packet page 4, paragraph six, sentence two: change “yes” to “no”
- Packet page 6, paragraph six, sentence one: change “Grandfathered” to “Grandfather”
- Packet page 7, paragraph four, sentence one: change “that” to “if”
- Packet page 10, paragraph two, sentence three: change “slash” to “/”
- Packet Page 14, paragraph three, sentence three: change “1960-time” to “1960”

Vice-Chair Bond made a motion, seconded by Member Watkins, to approve the amended November 8, 2022, meeting minutes.

Vote: Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Member Sharp made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Bond, to approve November 29, 2023, meeting minutes as presented.

Vote: Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Chair Plaag asked the HPC if they objected to him tabling December 6, 2022, December 13, 2022, and January 17, 2023, HPC minutes until the March 7, 2023, HPC Advisory meeting. With no objections from the other HPC members, Chair Plaag tabled these minutes until the next HPC Advisory meeting on March 7, 2023, at 3 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No individuals requested the opportunity to speak during public comment.

HPC ADVISORY REVIEW OF THE DOC & MERLE WATSON MURAL PROJECT

Chair Plaag thought it was important to review how the consideration of murals works in the historic district. He said after reading the proposed mural material in the meeting packet, he assumed that the proposed mural would be funded in part or in whole by the Town of Boone. Ms. Henderson explained that she and Ms. Bateman would like to submit a budget amendment to Council to approve the funds for the proposed mural to pull from the Municipal Service District (MSD) funding. She said in the past, MSD funds were used for Downtown Art Projects. She had discussed possible ways to fund the mural with Ms. Amy Davis, Town Manager.

Chair Plaag emphasized that the HPC’s comment in this meeting is with the understanding that the proposed mural is contingent upon the funding being either in whole or in part from the Town of Boone. He said this understanding allows the HPC to discuss and advise the Boone Town Council and the applicant regarding the proposed mural. He explained that if it turns out that, for whatever reason, the Town

Council does not approve the funding of the proposed mural, the Watauga Arts Council and the property owner, or property owner's representative, would be required to go through the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) process. He said the HPC does not consider in COA applications any element of the content of a mural. He said the HPC only considers those things that are related to the standards of the historic district if they get to that point. He said if the COA process is necessary, the HPC would have to provide notice in that hearing that the discussion in this meeting took place. He asked if there were any questions from the Staff or members of the public; there were no questions.

Ms. Bateman explained that the Watauga Arts Council is in a partnership with the Downtown Boone Development Association and Mr. Mike and Ms. Amy Forrester, who are representatives of the property owner, to place a proposed mural on the side of the building at 260 Howard Street, which is in the Downtown Boone Historic District. She said the side of the building that the proposed mural would be on faces South Depot Street and has a parking lot in front of it. She said the Millers Surplus Store used to be in this building, and it closed in 1999; before that, the Wilson Feed Store was in it. She said the project cost for the proposed mural is \$20,000, and the artist is Mr. Scott Nurkin. She said the proposed mural is part of the North Carolina Music Murals Project. She explained that in the Music Murals Project, the artist goes to North Carolina towns and paints a mural of a famous musician from that particular town. She noted that this building has an interesting history because it is believed that Doc Watson used to sit and busk on South Depot Street across from the old bus station. She said having the proposed mural on this building would make an interesting location to honor Doc and Merle Watson. She said this proposed mural would be the first mural to have two musicians on it. She further said having a mural of this type on this building is good for economic development and tourism in the historic district and would help the public to learn more about our local heroes. She explained because it is part of a larger mural trail system, there is an acrylic plaque that comes with the mural that would be adhered to the wall. The artist told Ms. Bateman that the acrylic plaque would be adhered to by drilling four small pilot holes into the concrete brick or mortar, then placing the anchor inside the holes and sealing them with epoxy. She said they are plastic; they will not weather in the rain, heat, or cold. She explained that the other materials that the artist would use is a latex masonry primer, Sherwin Williams paint as the background color, and aerosol Montana 94 for the detail work, will protect the mural with a latex matte finish or clear coat. She said the artist would include in his proposal a maintenance agreement for general maintenance and upkeep of the mural for the next ten years if the mural is installed.

Ms. Henderson explained that in her last position, she worked for the Town of Tryon, North Carolina. She said during that time, Mr. Nurkin approached the Town of Tryon to add Nina Simone to the North Carolina Musician Mural Trail, and the Nina Simone mural was completed in August 2020. She noted that this completed mural is featured in the meeting packet.

Ms. Henderson suggested adding Doc Watson to the North Carolina Musician Mural Trail. She said the artists first discussed a Doc Watson mural in North Wilkesboro, but later came to Boone and saw some great places with so much unique history for the Watson family. She said shortly after the artists visited Boone, they agreed that Boone was a perfect place to do this mural.

Ms. Henderson said that the North Carolina State Department of Natural and Cultural Resources noticed what was happening in the towns with the Musician Mural Trail, and they have tried to professionalize and make this Trail official. She said this is why the NC State Department of Natural and Cultural Resources sent Mr. Nurkin to the mural locations to place plaques at each mural because they are interested in having the murals preserved and promoted in the future as part of a NC State trail. She pointed out that 2023 is the NC Year of the Trail, also designated by the North Carolina legislature. She also pointed out

that March 3, 2023 would have been Doc Watson's 100th birthday, which also makes having this mural an exciting opportunity for Downtown Boone.

Chair Plaag opened the floor for questions from the HPC. Vice-Chair Bond said she was thrilled with the proposed location for the mural because it is close to the Appalachian Theatre and the Doc Watson stage. She also showed excitement that the mural was being proposed in 2023 not only because it would be Doc Watson's 100th birthday but for the second annual Boonerang Music and Arts Festival. She asked Ms. Henderson when the proposed mural would be completed. Ms. Henderson said they would love to unveil the proposed mural of Doc and Merle Watson at the 2023 Boonerang Music and Arts Festival, which means they would love to see it completed around May 2023; additionally, she stated there are some other things that are being planned to honor Doc Watson like a Doc Watson celebration at the Appalachian Theatre on that Friday night. She said people from the North Carolina Arts Council would be present at that celebration, which would be a great time to unveil the proposed mural. Ms. Bateman noted that same week the Watauga Arts Council's Board of Directors would be in town, and it would be a great opportunity for the board members to see the mural.

Ms. Bateman asked the HPC if they had any questions or concerns regarding the proposed mural materials. Member Watkins asked Chair Plaag about the names listed on the application. He said that Mr. and Mrs. Forrester's names were listed as the property owners, and if the HPC is required to show the actual owner on the application. Chair Plaag referred to page 116 of Appendix D of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), Downtown Boone Local Historic Design Standards and read:

Section 11.4

Historical markers, interpretive signage, and public art that is either (i) located on property owned, controlled, or maintained for public use by the Town within a historic district or the boundaries of a publicly-owned landmark or (ii) funded in whole or in part by the Town must be approved by Town Council and shall be exempt from the COA process.

- However, at least 30 days prior to consideration for approval by the Town Council, the proposed historical marker, interpretive signage, and public art shall have been considered by the HPC in its advisory capacity with respect to (i) applicable district or landmark standards regarding size, form, massing, materials, and placement, (ii) historical accuracy and appropriateness of the content, and (iii) any other factors, including but not limited to aesthetic considerations, that the HPC deems relevant. The HPC shall forward the results of its review to the Town Council. Town Council may consider approval of such historical marker, interpretive signage, or public art within 45 days of consideration by the HPC, regardless of whether or not HPC has submitted the results of its review by that date. Downtown Boone Local Historic District Design Standards--117
- By way of clarification, public art on public property owned or controlled by public authorities other than the Town is not intended to come within the exemption of this subsection 11.4.

Chair Plaag clarified that the HPC is not considering the review of the proposed mural in their formal COA process, but they are considering it strictly in their advisory capacity, as allowed by Section 11.4 of the historic district design standards. He said that the HPC is supposed to consider all the things in Section 11.4, but he did not know if the HPC was requiring property owner authorization, given that there have been statements made in this meeting that the proposed mural is going to be funded in whole or in part by the Town of Boone. He noted that he did not know if the owner of the building was as relevant to the HPC's review process so much that it is relevant to whatever permits may be necessary that the Planning and Inspections Department has to issue for a mural in the historic district. He presumed that somewhere

in the permitting process, whoever the authorized representative for this building has to sign off on the permit to approve the proposed mural being on their building.

Ms. Turner noted that she had received an email from the property owner giving Mr. Mike and Ms. Amy Forrester approval to speak on their behalf in this meeting. She explained that she did not receive the email in time to include it in the meeting packet. Chair Plaag confirmed with Ms. Turner that a permit from the Town would be required for work to proceed on the proposed mural, which would include the signature from the property owner or written authorization from the property owner. Member Watkins was satisfied with the explanation regarding the property owner's authorization.

Chair Plaag referred to packet page 61, which shows a mock-up of the proposed mural. He said the photo shows a well-known image of Doc and Merle Watson playing music together. He asked if what is shown in this image accurately represented what will be applied to the side of the building, not including the acrylic plaque. Ms. Bateman responded and stated she had asked Mr. Nurkin specifically if he was planning to have a border and a background with Doc and Merle Watson where the trees are and would that area be painted in. She said that she is waiting for Mr. Nurkin to respond to her question. She said having this proposed mural reviewed in an advisory capacity was helpful to know what the HPC would like to see in terms of scale and color on the proposed mural.

Ms. Henderson referred to the photo in the meeting packet of Roberta Flack and asked the HPC if we need to keep the image strictly below the building line and have a background, so it's very clear that the mural is not going up to the building line.

Chair Plaag said he believed that Mr. Nurkin was painting a modestly stylized version of the photographs in the meeting packet and, in some cases, adding elements in the background. He asked if it was fair to assume that there would be another stylized version of this photograph that might not have vegetation in the background and might not have other background elements. Ms. Henderson said it is up to how much artistic liberty is given to Mr. Nurkin. She added that if it is important to the HPC, the property owner, or others to maintain as much of the integrity as in the photograph, she believed that Mr. Nurkin would do his best to honor that request.

Chair Plaag asked if the HPC should refrain from concluding the font and color examples in the photograph as they appear on the proposed mural. Ms. Bateman responded you would see the image of Doc and Merle Watson, and it will be oriented like the image; however, she explained the font color will not be the brilliant blue color shown in the example photograph. She was unsure what color Mr. Nurkin would use for the font color. She said most of Mr. Nurkin's murals do not have that hard line around them. She imagined that Mr. Nurkin would blend the main part where Doc and Merle Watson are shown into a silhouette outline like in the other example photographs. She said Mr. Nurkin might take some liberties in blending the rest of the building with the color shown in the example photograph.

Chair Plaag talked about the placement, size, and scale of the proposed mural on the building. Chair Plaag said that based on the design standards, he did not negatively react to the scale as portrayed in the example photograph or the scale being expanded to the edges of the building or the roofline.

Chair Plaag noted that this building wall has already been painted, which means we are dealing with previously painted masonry. He said that was not an issue, the issue is with expanding the mural up the wall with terracotta tiles that serve as coping on the roof. He said he would not like to see the terracotta

tiles painted because it might violate a design standard. He did not have a negative reaction to the painted masonry itself or where it goes on the wall.

Member Watkins asked Chair Plaag since Mr. Nurkin was using a photo-real technique for the proposed mural, he was concerned if the copyright on the photograph would cover photo-real depictions of the image. Ms. Bateman said she believed that topic was covered in the Watauga County Arts Council Public Arts Policy, and that she would check on it. She thought Mr. Nurkin had already discussed the image to be used with the Watson family. Member Watkins noted that the Watson family might not own the copyright. Ms. Bateman thought it was fine since the selected photo would be painted. Chair Plaag thought that Member Watkins's copyright question was fair from a legal perspective, but he did not think the copyright topic fell under the HPC's review. Member Watkins thought the Town Attorney should be asked to render an opinion on it since the town is authorizing the funds. Chair Plaag said it is best to know the image's copyright status if Mr. Nurkin's intended use is considered a transformative use of the image, and if that would be permissible under fair use copyright law. He said that mere possession of a photo is not ownership of copyright. Ms. Henderson responded that she would follow up with Mr. Nurkin to see what he had done in the past regarding the photographs used on the other murals he had completed. Ms. Bateman, during the meeting, texted Mr. Nurkin regarding the use of the photograph. Mr. Nurkin told Ms. Bateman that he got permission from the photographer to use the photograph. Chair Plaag suggested that Ms. Bateman get permission to use the photograph in writing.

Ms. Bateman asked the other HPC members if they were comfortable with the proposed color and scale in the photograph. She pointed out that in the example of the image, Mr. Nurkin has the black color going up to the edges of the building. She asked the HPC if they wanted the scale to be smaller than the edges of the building or have the scale of the proposed mural be no more than 80 percent of the building. She said that Mr. Nurkin painted the black border to show where he would not paint the image of Doc and Merle Watson.

Ms. Bateman noted that it was her understanding that the HPC could not advise on colors. She asked the HPC if the proposed mural was approved would Mr. Nurkin have some freedom with painting up to the edges of the image and have a strong border around the image, or if Mr. Nurkin needs to stay within the border and leave a buffer around it. She confirmed with Chair Plaag that he did not have a negative reaction to the mural being painted up as long as it did not touch the terracotta tiles. She asked if she needed to re-submit another photograph example, if Mr. Nurkin adjusted the proposed photograph.

Chair Plaag asked Ms. Bateman if it is correct that the elevation of the side of the building is otherwise featureless with no windows or doors, that the HPC would normally be concerned about under the design standards. Ms. Bateman confirmed that the side of the building that the proposed mural is on is featureless. Chair Plaag pointed out that he needed to be made aware of any language in the design standards that speak specifically to murals and how far they extend with regard to the face of the building. He checked the design standards and read from Appendix D portions of 11.3:

- Artwork should be installed so that it does not conceal, result in damage to, or remove historical details or features.
- Artwork should have an appropriate massing in relation to the building, site, or district, and be scaled appropriately for the intended space.
- The colors and color palette of artwork is not regulated, except that neon colors are not allowed.

He responded to Ms. Bateman's question regarding the color used for the proposed mural. He said the Town Attorney has pointed out that defining neon colors are a little problematic.

Vice-Chair Bond pointed out that she liked how the mural bleeds into the brick on the Nina Simone mural and the brick corner on the John Coltrane mural. She thought it was a mistake to put the Black Mountain Brewing Company sticker on the Roberta Flack mural, and she hoped there would not be a beer company sticker as part of the proposed mural for this building. She said she would rather see the paint bleed out to the edge and not have such a dark finish. Ms. Henderson explained that Mr. Nurkin was trying to demonstrate that he could do it if it were important to maintain a uniform color around. She assumed it would look similar to the others and have a grayscale to fade into the black color.

Member Sharp pointed out that the HPC is not giving direction on color but noticed in the other examples Mr. Nurkin stayed with less bright font color in the artwork. He thought this would be advantageous, but that it is not shown in the photograph example for the proposed mural. Chair Plaag agreed with Member Sharp that the blue in the photograph example was a type of neon blue color that is very bright. Ms. Bateman explained that Mr. Nurkin would put the lettering on the proposed mural with less neon color.

Chair Plaag asked the HPC if there were concerns with the scale of the building with regard to the building located in the district. He pointed out that the HPC is concerned about congruity with the rest of the district. He asked the HPC members if they had concerns with the proposed mural taking up the vast majority of this wall on a one-story building at Howard Street and South Depot Street.

Vice-Chair Bond noted that the photograph is very large. She said depending on how Mr. Nurkin would soften the background and bleed out the edges, maybe these things would soften it and not make it look so large.

Chair Plaag compared the Earl Scruggs and Robert Flack murals and noted that they seem to work using the whitespace instead of having a full background that highlights. He said the white space also highlights the musical artists you are trying to highlight because there is nothing to distract from them. He said it also allows you to still see the building and the details of the building. He said it is harder to do if the entire image with the background of the darker mural is going to the edges of the building. Ms. Henderson pointed out that she thought Mr. Nurkin was trying to convey that idea in the Earl Scruggs mural mock-up. She said if Mr. Nurkin were to do the black background, it would probably look similar to the Earl Scruggs mural, where the black traces the building line, and you have the mural image that softens inward. She said if this is the look that the HPC wants, she would make that clear to Mr. Nurkin.

Vice-Chair Bond asked Ms. Henderson if more of the guitar was showing in the image. Ms. Henderson said yes, and the truck shown in the submitted photograph was in the way that particular day the photograph was made. Vice-Chair Bond noted that she had seen murals with scenes that made the public want to have their photo taken by it. She thought if maybe the image was smaller, it would give more opportunity for the public to want to spend more time by the proposed mural. She said the town is fortunate to have this building location for a proposed mural.

Member Watkins asked for the photograph example of the proposed mural to be shown by Town Staff. He pointed out that if vehicles are parking in front of the proposed mural, it would be helpful if it was placed high enough on the building wall above the vehicles. Ms. Bateman responded and noted that it was discussed to raise the image above the line of vehicles that would be parked in front of it.

Chair Plaag asked about the acrylic plaque mentioned earlier in this meeting. He confirmed with Ms. Bateman there is only one plaque that is shown in a plastic sleeve. Ms. Bateman had noted earlier that

the plaque had already been ordered. Chair Plaag pointed out that it was unfortunate that it had already been ordered and the holes may already be drilled in the plaque. He said it is very important when mounting the plaque to the wall that no one penetrates the block itself. He reiterated that the fasteners should not go into the block because that could create integrity issues with a block and also cause water intrusion. He explained that one of the dangers with painted masonry is that you already have a problem with condensation trapped behind the block, which causes spalling and can pop off the face of the brick. He further explained that the artist proposes putting a sealer over the plaque, which adds to a moisture and problem. He said that when you put a hole in the brick, you have created a place for moisture to get in and potentially be an issue. He suggested that the fasteners be attached through the mortar and not through the masonry itself, which is a better way to fasten the acrylic sign.

Member Watkins asked the HPC to review the text on the acrylic sign. He said the text needed to be more accurate because Doc Watson was remembered as a busker in Downtown Boone and not playing in many clubs. He said that Mr. Ralph Rinzler found Doc Watson and helped him and Merle Watson get their start in the music business. Chair Plaag pointed out evidence of Doc Watson playing at the Appalachian Theatre and the Past Time Theatre in photographs from the 1940s. He said he struggled to know where the clubs were in Boone in the same timeframe. He suggested asking Dr. Gary Boye in the Music Department of Appalachian State University, who has done a lot of research on Doc Watson, and he would be a source to ask about the accuracy of the clubs in Boone during that timeframe.

Ms. Bateman said there was a website and a QR code on the plaque that contained information about Doc Watson and an opportunity for the public to listen to his music. She would contact the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources and have them revisit their information on the plaque about Doc Watson.

Chair Plaag asked the HPC members if they had other questions or concerns about the scale, massing, or other aesthetic concerns regarding the proposal. There were no further questions or concerns raised at this meeting.

Chair Plaag asked Ms. Mitchell if she could list the HPC's recommendations and concerns and present them to Council. Ms. Mitchell said yes between herself, Ms. Bateman, and Ms. Henderson, they could articulate the information to Council. Ms. Mitchell said there might be an agenda item regarding the proposed mural on the Council agenda for the February 8, 2023, meeting. He voiced a procedural concern and noted that the UDO says that the HPC has to consider it in its advisory capacity at least 30 days prior to consideration for approval by the Council. He asked if the Town Attorney should be consulted regarding if there is a 30-day waiting period between when the HPC considers it and when the Council discusses it. Ms. Henderson said they would not present the proposal as an action item at the upcoming Council meeting.

Chair Plaag talked about the list of recommendations and concerns and asked the HPC if they would approve him reviewing the list made by Ms. Mitchell, and then that list could be forwarded to Council for their review. He asked for the HPC to make a motion to recommend approval. There was consensus from the other HPC members for Chair Plaag to review the list before it was presented to Council.

Motion and Vote:

Chair Plaag made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Bond for the HPC to recommend approval for Chair Plaag to check the list of recommendations and concerns discussed by the HPC for accuracy before the list is presented to Council.

Vote: Aye – All
Nay – None
The motion passed.

Chair Plaag suggested giving Ms. Mitchell a week to create the list of recommendations and concerns and giving him two or three days to review the list. He thought the list would go to Council in the next ten days.

At approximately 4:18 p.m., Ms. Bateman and Ms. Henderson left the meeting.

HPC INTERN INTRODUCTION AND UPDATE

Chair Plaag introduced Ms. Ellie McCorkle, who works in two capacities. He explained that she is the Digital Photography Coordinator, a paid position at Digital Watauga. He said she supervises the paid Staff and volunteers and is the guru of all things at Digital Watauga. He explained that her second capacity is working for the HPC in compiling a library of images for the various buildings in her Digital Photography capacity. He said the main reason she is on the HPC agenda is to give an update on the first of the two local landmark designations, the R.L. Clay House, better known as the Rivers House. Ms. McCorkle is also the intern working on the landmark reports for the HPC.

Ms. McCorkle informed the HPC that she was from Ashe County. She holds a master's degree in Historic Preservation from Appalachian State University. She said she is using her knowledge and training to work through the already digitized collections at Digital Watauga for the HPC, and she is trying to create a photo library of all historic district properties. She has gone through approximately one-third of the collection, and has at least one image for all buildings, except maybe one or two because they were built after 1960.

Ms. McCorkle said the first draft of the Rivers House landmark designation report was completed. She was made aware of some organizational and architectural concerns, and she will address those and do more editing. She said she would be ready to begin working on the Jones House landmark designation report soon. Chair Plaag pointed out that Ms. McCorkle will have the first draft of the Rivers House prepared for the HPC to review at the March advisory meeting. He said she was on track to have the Jones House designation report ready for the HPC to review at the June advisory meeting.

Chair Plaag asked the HPC and Staff if they had any questions for Ms. McCorkle regarding the two designation reports. Ms. Mitchell noted that she was in a supervisory role to Ms. McCorkle as the HPC intern. Ms. Mitchell voiced her appreciation for Ms. McCorkle's patience in working with the Staff as they learn together through the designation report process. Ms. Mitchell pointed out to the HPC that while Ms. McCorkle was working on the Rivers House designation report, she included the parcels for the house and the property. Chair Plaag clarified that there might be more than two parcels. Ms. McCorkle said there is an eight-acre tract behind the house that includes the garage, and the house itself, and to the north of the eight-acre property, there are three different plots that go along Poplar Grove Road and Rivers Street. He suggested including all of the properties because that's the historical association with the property. He suspected that the State Historic Preservation Commission (SHPO) would also recommend including all the properties in the designation report. He included that the way the deed reads, all properties will be reserved for the various listed uses. Vice-Chair Bond agreed that these properties should not be seen as separate properties.

Chair Plaag pointed out that it is challenging to think about boundaries in a way that doesn't necessarily follow the parcel boundaries. He said you tend to think about parcels when you see parcel boundaries.

He said sometimes a National Register boundary or local landmark boundary isn't the same as what the parcel is. He said the property has other resources that are significant in their own way but not necessarily significant to the context of the house. He said in this case, you have Baby, the Champion North Carolina Sugar Maple located just up the hill from the house property. He said Rivers Park and the current iteration of the Daniel Boone Monument do not meet the 50-year test, although it contains plaques from the original Daniel Boone monument.

STAFF UPDATES

Ms. Mitchell informed the HPC that Staff had received a letter from the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, stating that the Town of Boone's recommendation for Certification for CLG status was received on December 14, 2022. The letter welcomed the Town of Boone as a local partner in the Federal Preservation Program. Ms. Mitchell said the Town of Boone has been added to the CLG database, and for more information on the CLG program, go to: www.nps.gov/clg. She said the Historic Preservation Facebook page and the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Facebook page shows that the Town of Boone has CLG status.

Ms. Mitchell noted that the Council's Store Historical Marker was unveiled on Friday, February 3, 2023, and that it was a great community event. She thanked the Public Works Department and the Cultural Resources Department for all their help making it a successful event.

Ms. Mitchell said the Town of Boone had received the Hayes-Bryan-Greene Cemetery Historical Marker. She said the HPC can now discuss a date for that marker ceremony. Chair Plaag said the HPC had discussed placing the historical marker at the intersection of Queen Street and Water Street at the bulb-out area. Council Liaison Roseman said this proposed location for this historical marker, being across the street from the new parking deck, is an opportunity to highlight some of the histories of our community.

Chair Plaag began discussing when to unveil the Hayes-Bryan-Greene Cemetery Historical Marker. He suggested having the unveiling ceremony early in the afternoon on the first Friday, June 2, 2023, no later than 1 p.m. on Queen Street. Mr. Mark Freed, Director of Cultural Resources pointed out that the Public Works Department would appreciate doing their work, like closing the street earlier in the day.

Motion and Vote:

Chair Plaag made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Bond, to recommend to Council that the Hayes-Bryan-Greene Cemetery Historical Marker unveiling ceremony be held on the first Friday, June 2, 2023, at 1 p.m. at the marker location and to request that the eastbound portion of Queen Street be temporarily closed for about one-half hour before the unveiling to about one-half hour after the unveiling, from approximately 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. between North Water Street and the turnaround in the middle of that block of Queen Street.

Vote: Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Ms. Mitchell gave an update stating that Staff had completed the paperwork requirements of for the Watauga County Jail Landmark. She said the ordinance had been recorded, and the tax office and property owner had been contacted. She said on the GIS online web map on the Town of Boone website, you can now see the property has been added, and it is shown on the map with the landmark symbol, which is a black star.

Ms. Mitchell informed the HPC that since the Town of Boone received its CLG status, Ms. Kristi Brantley, CLG Coordinator at SHPO, let her know that she comes to different jurisdictions that have the CLG status and conducts an orientation session that would be included as part of the training for the first year. She added that this session would count towards a training credit. Ms. Mitchell said that Ms. Brantley would be coming to a neighboring county in April 2023, and she wanted to see if the HPC preferred to have the training in-person or in a virtual setting. Ms. Mitchell said that Ms. Brantley can do the afternoon of April 10 or the morning on April 12. Ms. Mitchell told Ms. Brantley that the Council meetings are held in the afternoon on April 12, and Ms. Brantley confirmed that she could be available on the morning of April 12. Vice-Chair Bond said she would not be in town on April 10. Ms. Brantley had told Ms. Mitchell that Ms. Jennifer Cathey, Preservation Specialist, and Ms. Ramona Bartos, Directory of the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, might be able to come for the orientation session. Chair Plaag agreed that it would be great for everyone to attend the session on April 12. Chair Plaag asked the HPC members if they could attend this date for the session. There was a consensus from the HPC members that they could all attend the said session on April 12. Council Liaison Roseman asked if the session could be a hybrid so she could attend. Chair Plaag and Ms. Mitchell agreed the session could also be in a hybrid format.

Ms. Mitchell discussed possible text revisions to Appendix D and said one of the things that Staff had previously considered when trying to make some revisions to Appendix D was specific text on complimentary colors and neighboring buildings. She said the Staff had decided that instead of doing a text amendment process for these few things piece by piece, they would try to look at Appendix D as a whole. She said some text revisions were needed as we continue through the COA process to clarify the standards for applicants to follow and to better understand the process. She said she had been looking at the formatting of historic district standards in other jurisdictions, specifically Winston-Salem Forsyth County, North Carolina because they have multiple districts and different sets of standards. She said they have recently revised one set of standards for their West End Overlay Historic District. She said she also liked the Wilmington, North Carolina Historic District Standards for formatting purposes. She explained due to her having to work on the Comprehensive Plan update, she has yet to set a specific timeline for the Appendix D revisions. She said as she completes, the proposed revisions, she will present them to the HPC for their feedback.

Ms. Mitchell explained that while looking at other jurisdictions and how they handle a COA process, she saw different patterns of how their standards were more succinct. She presented the suggestion of having two documents one is for the guidelines, then having a separate document that is standards. She asked the HPC if they had any concerns with the information she found. Chair Plaag suggested that she compare apples to apples. He said the Wilmington Historic District is a large urban area, unlike Boone. He urged Ms. Mitchell to look at Downtown Historic Districts that are similar in size and architectural makeup if she was going to make comparisons. He said that Hendersonville, North Carolina, has a great Downtown Historic District. He said the HPC standards that the HPC wrote were partly based on the Hendersonville standards. He said it might be helpful to look at the way that Hendersonville, NC, is doing things now. He said there are probably other communities that are similar in size and scale to what Downtown Boone is, and they could be researched to see how they do the various things.

Ms. Mitchell explained to the HPC that Staff has started making two meeting packets to be more efficient with Staff time. She said one would be an advisory meeting packet, and the other one will be for the quasi-judicial meetings.

Ms. Mitchell explained to the HPC that Staff had discussed putting the advisory meeting minutes in the advisory meeting packet and the quasi-judicial meeting minutes in the quasi-judicial meeting packet. In

addition, Staff had discussed putting the quasi-judicial meeting minutes at the end of the agenda, so the applicants have the priority to present their case first.

Ms. Mitchell explained that for the COA cases, there needs to be a written decision completed for each case where applicable. She noted that Staff would need to go back and review the COA cases and create those written decisions. She pointed out that the written decisions must be approved at the quasi-judicial meetings.

Ms. Mitchell asked the HPC if they would be interested in discussing the agenda items at the end of each advisory meeting for the next advisory meeting. She said that Staff failed to put this topic on this meeting agenda, but they would add it to future agendas.

Chair Plaag responded to Staff's decision to put the quasi-judicial meeting minutes at the end of the quasi-judicial agenda. He voiced his concern that he didn't know which would be worse, asking the applicant to wait at the beginning of a meeting for the approval of meeting minutes or asking the applicant to wait at the end of the meeting for the approval of meeting minutes. He felt it would be more insulting to ask the applicant to wait until the end of the meeting to approve meeting minutes and possibly have to continue their case to approve the meeting minutes. Chair Plaag said that he preferred that the HPC deal with the quasi-judicial meeting minutes at the beginning of a quasi-judicial meeting. Member Sharp and Watkins agreed with Chair Plaag to add the approval of minutes at the beginning of the quasi-judicial meeting. Member Watkins stated that he thought applicants expected to sit through a certain amount of administrivia at the beginning of the meeting.

Ms. Mitchell explained that Town Council wanted her to contact the HPC to welcome them to attend the work session on Wednesday, February 8, 2023, at noon, which is scheduled for approximately one hour in the Council Chambers, and it was also available on WebEx. She said she heard back from Chair Plaag and Vice-Chair Bond regarding attending the work session. She said she would attend the work session in person in the Council Chambers.

HPC MEMBER UPDATES

Chair Plaag tabled this agenda item to the next advisory meeting.

INTERPRETATIVE PANELS FOR BOONE CEMETERY

Chair Plaag asked Ms. Mitchell to explain why the Staff chose the Vacker Sign Company. Ms. Mitchell explained that she had been working with the Public Works Department regarding this work for the Boone Cemetery. She said in her research of sign companies with the resources provided by the HPC, the Vacker Sign Company offered the most information, such as a potential desired product and graphic design services. She said the other companies she researched did not provide graphic design services. She added that the costs were comparable to the other researched companies, but it will depend on how many panels to determine the final costs for the HPC budget.

Ms. Mitchell explained that she told the Vacker Sign Company the HPC would want to put some interpretative panels in a local historic cemetery. She referred to the materials on packet page 77 that the Vacker Sign Company sent to her to present to the HPC for their review. She talked about the different styles including the Frameless Pedestal Mount Style and Frame Mount Style so the HPC could see the available options. Chair Plaag asked the HPC to review the information provided on packet page 77 of the meeting packet through the end, including the draft marker text. He said he would be looking into ways to compress that draft information. He said he would be open to suggestions on condensing those to fit

more appropriate word counts. He said he was trying to put together some images that might be useful to include on these to make them more visually attractive. He asked if the HPC had any questions or concerns about the discussion of the panels. No questions or concerns were voiced in this meeting regarding the discussion of the panels. Chair Plaag also asked that this item be the first order of business at the March Advisory meeting.

OTHER DISCUSSION

There were no other topics discussed at this meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice-Chair Bond made a motion, seconded by Member Watkins, to adjourn the meeting at 5:11 p.m.

Eric Plaag, Chair

Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary

**TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 7, 2023, 3:00 p.m.
WebEx Video Conferencing**

Historic Preservation Commission Members in Attendance:

Chair Eric Plaag, Vice-Chair Bettie Bond, Chuck Watkins, and James Sharp

Student Member: Riley Ziegler

Council Liaison: Virginia Roseman

Town Staff in Attendance:

Jessica Mitchell-Long-Range/Special Projects Planner, Marlene Crosby-Board Secretary, Laney Pilkington
- Administrative Support Specialist/Communications

Others in Attendance: Ellie McCorkle-HPC Intern

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Eric Plaag called the Boone Historic Preservation Commission meeting via WebEx to order at 3:04 p.m.

Chair Plaag welcomed new Student Member Riley Ziegler to the HPC. He asked everyone to introduce themselves. Student Member Ziegler stated that she is from the Miami, Florida, area. She is a junior at Appalachian State University with a major in Public History and a minor in Anthropology.

Chair Eric Plaag introduced himself as the Chair of the HPC, Digital Watauga Project, and the Watauga Historical Society. Member Watkins stated that he used to work with the Public History Programs at ASU. Vice-Chair Bettie Bond introduced herself as the HPC Vice-Chair, and President of the Watauga County Historical Society and noted that she also worked in the Public History Department at ASU with Member Watkins until she retired in 1996. Member Sharp introduced himself as an employee of ASU working in the Appalachian Energy Center, and he also lectures in Urban Planning.

Chair Plaag introduced Council Liaison, Virginia Roseman and explained that she takes information to Council from the HPC for their review and vice versa. Council Liaison Roseman explained to Student Member Zeigler how much she recognized the work that the HPC does on this Commission. She further explained to Student Member Zeigler that this was an opportunity for her to learn a lot from these Commission members, as well as Student Member Zeigler providing feedback on her studies and views from being a student.

Chair Plaag introduced Ms. Ellie McCorkle as the HPC Intern and he said she is employed by the Town of Boone. Ms. McCorkle said she is the Project Coordinator for Digital Watauga. She said she is working on the R.L. Clay Rivers House and the Jones House Local Landmark Historic Designation reports for the Town of Boone.

Chair Plaag recognized Ms. Laney Pilkington, who was attending the meeting. Ms. Pilkington explained that she oversees the Town of Boone's social media sites. She explained that she is attending this meeting to learn more about the Boone Cemetery Historic Marker project, so when it comes time to market it, she will have some background knowledge on the marker project.

Chair Plaag introduced Ms. Marlene Crosby as the Board Secretary for the HPC.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Vice-Chair Bond made a motion, seconded by Member Sharp, to adopt the agenda as presented.

Vote: Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Plaag made the following corrections to December 6, 2022, meeting minutes:

- Packet page 8, paragraph seven, second sentence change from: “He said he assumed that ahead of everything on his list was to occur between now and June of 2023” to “He said that all the things on the fiscal year 2023 priority list are ahead of any 2024 priorities and would be completed first”
- Packet page 8, paragraph 8, third sentence remove: “had been encumbered”
- Packet page 9, paragraph 2, fourth sentence change: “hire” to “hiring”
- Packet page 9, paragraph 4, last sentence “change: “Chair Plaag noted that he did include in his estimations the cost of a graphic designer to make the panels because he nor the HPC cannot do that type of work but can write the material” to “Chair Plaag noted that he did include in his estimations the cost of a graphic designer to make the panels because he neither the HPC can do that type of work but can write the narrative”
- Packet page 10, paragraph 3, fifth sentence change: “comprehensive” to “neighborhood”
- Packet page 10, paragraph third sentence change” “grant CLG-funded projects” to “CLG-grant-funded projects”
- Packet Page 10, paragraph 6, seventh sentence change: “we should exploring funds” to “we should be exploring funds”
- Packet Page 11, paragraph 1, second sentence change: “make recommendations” to “make grant recommendations”
- Packet Page 13, paragraph 5, third sentence change: “descendants from the Council’s” to descendants to the Council’s”
- Packet Page 13, paragraph 5, sixth sentence change: “method to due” to “method due”

Vice-Chair Bond made a motion, seconded by Member Watkins, to approve the amended December 6, 2022, meeting minutes.

Vote: Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Chair Plaag made the following corrections to December 13, 2022, meeting minutes:

- Packet Page 15, paragraph 6, remove the whole paragraph
- Packet Page 16, paragraph 6, first sentence change” tenured” to “tendered”
- Packet Page 20, paragraph 6, second sentence change: “sprawled” to “spalled”
- Packet Page 21, paragraph 5, first sentence change: “about constructing” to “about whether constructing”
- Packet Page 21, paragraph 5, fifth sentence change: “short-signed” to “short, signed”
- Packet Page 22, paragraph 2, third sentence change: “permit” to “application”
- Packet Page 22, paragraph 5, third sentence change: “the damaged brick” to “the individual damaged brick”
- Packet Page 22, paragraph 5, fifth sentence change: “brick” to “bricks”
- Packet Page 22, paragraph 7, second sentence change: “would not be” to “would be”
- Packet Page 25, paragraph 3, first sentence change: “alternations” to “alterations”

- Packet Page 25, paragraph 3, second sentence change: district, he said would” to “district would”

Student Member Ziegler made a motion, seconded by Member Sharp to approve the amended December 13, 2022 meeting minutes.

Vote: Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No individuals requested the opportunity to speak during public comment.

INTERPRETATIVE PANELS FOR BOONE CEMETERY

Chair Plaag asked Ms. Jessica Mitchell, Long-Range/Special Projects Planner, to explain why Staff chose the Vacker Sign Company to purchase the interpretative panels. Ms. Mitchell said that, to her knowledge, Staff had not purchased signs from this company before, but their products are similar to what Staff had worked with in the past. She said the Vacker Sign Company offered helpful materials, and design services (to design the layout on the panels), and their prices were reasonable. She added that she and Mr. Todd Moody, Public Works Deputy Director, researched other companies and decided that the Vacker Sign Company would be the best one to work with on the interpretative panels for the reasons listed above.

Chair Plaag pointed out that the HPC will also be working on the Stoneman’s Raid interpretative panels, which will presumably go in the vicinity of the Downtown Boone Post Office. He said if we have a good experience with the Vacker Sign Company for the Boone Cemetery interpretative panels, we might want to use this same sign company for the Stoneman’s Raid interpretative panels.

Chair Plaag reminded the HPC that at the last HPC meeting, he had asked the HPC to review the materials in the meeting packet regarding the interpretative panels. He said it was clear to him in the last discussion on the proposed panel text that the text would need to be reduced on the panels. He talked about the challenge of trying to tell the whole story in a brief manner while still keeping the interest of the reader. He said that this could be most successfully done by using a combination of images and text. He noted that when you reduce the text on the panels, it may be that some of the nuances of the story may not be included on the interpretative panels.

Chair Plaag said the goal is for the HPC to discuss what they would like for the interpretative panels to look like as far as the size and type of panel, then discuss the amount of text on the interpretative panels. He said once these topics have been decided on, then the HPC could send that information to the Vacker Sign Company to design the interpretative panels.

Discussion ensued on the size of the interpretative panels. Ms. Mitchell explained that she and Mr. Moody had discussed the various sizes for the interpretative panels, and they suggested the 24-inch x 36-inch (24” x 36”) size sign, with the one-half inch high-pressure laminate panel material. She noted that this is one of the better grades of material offered to print the text.

Ms. Mitchell noted that she and Mr. Moody had discussed a proposed sign height of 36 inches and if this height would be feasible at the Boone Cemetery if any visitor were to use a wheelchair there.

Ms. Mitchell mentioned the National Park Service guidelines previously shared with the HPC regarding choosing and installing interpretative panels. From the Vacker Sign Catalog, she suggested that the HPC review the frameless pedestal mount style for use with the self-supporting sign panel. She noted that the HPC had discussed using the frameless style because it would not collect as much debris as some of the other styles. She said she asked the Vacker Sign Company about the frameless style, and they said this style was chosen mostly because it has a more contemporary look. She said that the Vacker Sign Company told her that there are weep holes in the frames that allow for drainage; however, she thought that frameless might be a good choice for maintenance purposes. She also referenced the NPS Traditional Style Frameless Pedestal panel included in the sign catalog.

Ms. Mitchell said that she and Mr. Moody had some questions regarding the location of the panels in the cemetery, and the Commission could answer this particular question after this discussion.

Chair Plaag said after reviewing the materials in the meeting packet, he agreed that the 24" by 36" sign is a good size for the interpretative panels. Vice-Chair Bond agreed with Chair Plaag on the size of the signs and especially since there would be several of them in the cemetery. She pointed out that weep holes can freeze and can also get pine straw stuck in them. Member Watkins agreed with the size of the signs and confirmed that the signs would be 36 inches off of the ground. He pointed out that with the height of the signs being 36 inches off of the ground, the point size of the text would need to be increased so the average person can read it from that height. He said increasing the point size of the text would make it more difficult to reduce the word count on each interpretative panel.

Council Liaison Virginia Roseman let the HPC know that her husband, Mr. Roseman is a professional writer and editor. She had reviewed the sign material in the meeting packet with her husband, and he had offered to help the HPC with reducing the text for the interpretative panels. She said that her husband would need to know the information that the HPC would want to be included in the text, and Mr. Roseman could assist with the informational flow of the text. Chair Plaag said once the HPC has reviewed and tried to reduce the text as far as they can do it, he would like for Mr. Roseman to see if he can further reduce the text.

Vice-Chair Bond reminded the HPC that the Boone Cemetery is part of the Downtown Historic Boone Walking Tour. She pointed out that the information in the signage could include other things in Downtown Boone.

Discussion ensued on using QR codes. Council Liaison Roseman recalled a past discussion where QR codes might be used on some of the interpretative panels. Chair Plaag explained that we do not want the QR code embedded into what is printed because QR codes change for various reasons. He said we do not want to be stuck with a QR code that we cannot update. Council Liaison Roseman asked if the HPC had discussed using a metal QR code that could be replaced. Ms. Mitchell explained that she and Mr. Moody had discussed adding a QR code to the historic markers and using the same material on the interpretative panels. She noted that the Public Works Department had made a draft of a sticker using a durable blue material that could be attached to the signposts and is not on the actual interpretative panel.

Chair Plaag voiced his concern regarding the frameless or edgeless style sign mounted on a stake. He said the Vacker Sign Company noted in their materials that this style is not appropriate in places where you anticipate the possibility of vandalism. He said there had been quite a bit of vandalism at the Boone Cemetery over the last ten years. He said the Vacker Sign Company notes in their materials that a framed style is the better one to use, he said if the panel gets damaged or soiled over time, you would only need

to replace the panel and not the frame. Council Liaison Roseman referred to packet page 50 and the National Park Service (NPS) Traditional Style Frameless Pedestal – Posts with Flange. He said he was not clear on whether this style has the TUFF panel or the High-Pressure Laminate type panel. Ms. Mitchell said it was her understanding that any of the panels would work in any style of framing. She noted that the prices listed on (page 50) are for the height of the sign and the panel material prices are at the beginning of the catalog.

Chair Plaag referred to packet pages 35 and 36 and he agreed that the most durable frame and material type would be the NPS Traditional Style Frameless Pedestal with the one-half inch, High-Pressure Laminate type rather than the TUFF Panel type. He said the high-pressure laminate is scratch and gouge resistant. He said he has seen scratching and gouging on these signs when they are damaged, although he said he did not see as much graffiti. Student Member Ziegler said that you are more likely to see scratching and gouging on signs because people most always have their keys with them. She noted that stickers might be a concern to consider as well. Chair Plaag said with the level of the scratch and gouge resistance on the high-pressure laminate, it should endure the sticker issue better. Member Watkins pointed out that the Frame Mount Style is not self-supporting and will require a frame in an angle mount.

Chair Plaag said that if the Vacker Sign Company can do the High-Pressure Laminate in the Frameless Pedestal style that has no top or bottom frame, he would agree with using it. He added that this one costs a little more but it would be worth it.

Chair Plaag noted that the Tsunami cameras are expensive but he asked Ms. Mitchell if she would check to see if one of them could be placed in the Boone Cemetery. He said there is already a light pole in the center of the Boone Cemetery to install it on. Ms. Mitchell said she would check on it.

Ms. Mitchell asked the HPC if they wanted to go over the different frame-type mounts in the catalog. Chair Plaag said he heard consensus from the HPC on having the stocky legs and side frame and trying not to have the top and bottom sides to the frame. He asked Student Member Ziegler and Member Sharp to voice their feedback on this topic and they both were in agreement with Chair Plaag.

Council Liaison Roseman referred to packet page 50 and asked about the flanges. Chair Plaag read that the pre-drilled holes in the flange correspond with tapped or drilled holes. He further explained that the flange number corresponds to the height of the bottom edge of the sign once it is mounted.

Student Member Ziegler pointed out that she knows how some QR codes contain malware on the Appalachian State University campus. Ms. Mitchell showed the HPC the draft QR code that was made of durable blue material. She said this QR code could be mounted to a pole and could be changed out by placing another sticker over it. She said they are made in-house by the Public Works Department. She noted that she had not asked how much the QR code would cost the Town. Chair Plaag asked Student Member Ziegler if she felt that the draft QR code would stand out effectively. She said yes, it would stand out because of the reflective nature of it and because it is one piece, and if another sticker was placed over it, you could tell that sticker was not the correct QR code.

Chair Plaag referred to packet page 51 and an aluminum brochure box. He said there were four interpretative panels being proposed, and he did not think they needed four brochure boxes. He said since the Boone Cemetery is on the Downtown Historic Boone Walking Tour, the use of the brochure box would be an opportunity to alert people that there is a walking tour in Downtown Boone. He said they could plan to put a card or a tri-fold map of the walking tour with a QR code in the brochure box, and the public can

use that QR code to be informed of how they can follow the tour on their smartphone. He encouraged including another brochure box for one of the cemetery panels in addition to the one that is already at the entrance to the Boone Cemetery for the walking tour map. He noted that the price of the brochure box was \$152.00.

Discussion ensued on the cost of the interpretative panels. Chair Plaag referred to the prices on packet page 43. He calculated that the cost for the four panels being proposed would be \$1,423.00 per sign, inclusive of the design work. He said the total would be approximately \$6,000.00, which includes the cost of \$152.00 for the Aluminum Brochure Box. He also said that approximately \$1,500.00 would be needed for the Stoneman's Raid interpretive panel, plus the labor for having them installed by the Public Works Department. Council Liaison Roseman asked the HPC to allow the Public Works Department to choose the date to install the interpretative panels when it comes time for installation. She noted that the Council is supportive of the interpretative panels being installed, and she will make sure that these dollar amounts are included in the budget for the Council's consideration.

Discussion ensued on the location of the aluminum brochure box. Ms. Mitchell pointed out that having one location for a brochure box would be easier to be maintained, whether it be the Planning and Inspections Department, the Cultural Resources Department, or the HPC maintaining it. Council Liaison Roseman mentioned perhaps putting the brochure box near the Stoneman's Raid interpretative panel in the Downtown area because there might be more exposure there, than at the Boone Cemetery. She added that the information included in the brochure box in the Downtown area could lead the public to the Boone Cemetery. Vice-Chair Bond agreed that having the brochure box in the Downtown area would have more exposure than having it at the Boone Cemetery. Student Member Ziegler said the HPC might want to consider having the brochure box at the Stoneman's Raid location because it would be in an area with more trash cans that would discourage litter, whereas at the Boone Cemetery, the brochure box might be used for a trash can and the tri-fold papers might get moved out of the brochure box.

Chair Plaag said that he would begin to draft some text and a design based on the decisions made in this meeting. He asked the HPC if there was a consensus for him to work on the proposed text and design. There was consensus from the HPC for him to do so.

He asked the HPC to give him two months' time to work on these things. He said in the meantime, this gives Council Liaison Roseman an opportunity to take the estimated cost of \$7,652.00 to Council for their consideration for this year's budget. He reiterated that this proposed dollar amount was for the four signs, three signs for Boone Cemetery interpretative panels, one sign for the Stoneman's Raid interpretative panel, and one brochure box. He estimated that it might be around May of this year before the HPC would know the Council's decision on approving the proposed budget amount.

Ms. Mitchell said she would consult with Mr. Moody, who is familiar with how the Town has done other interpretative panels. She also said she would discuss with Mr. Moody the next steps for these interpretative panels based on the decisions made by the HPC in this meeting.

Ms. Mitchell asked the HPC to think about the different locations where they want to place the interpretative panels. She said that Mr. Moody mentioned that it might be helpful, when it gets closer to time to install the interpretative panels, that the HPC go out and physically determine an exact location for the panels. She said part of figuring out the location would need to include which direction the sign should face. She said that Mr. Moody would be glad to meet the HPC at the Boone Cemetery to further the discussion of the installation of the interpretative panels. Chair Plaag pointed out that he really liked

the idea of straddling the line with the interpretative panel sign, so you are standing on the line while reading the sign.

Chair Plaag reminded everyone that the fieldstones are now in the cemetery marking grave sites. He noted that we need to be careful, in particular with the Union Soldier's gravesites, not to be driving the legs of a sign through a grave site. He said there might be a spot between the two trees that is not a gravesite, and this might be the best spot for the panels.

HPC INTERN LANDMARK REPORT UPDATE

Chair Plaag asked Ms. Ellie McCorkle, HPC Intern, to give a brief update on the Rivers House Landmark report. She said that she had updated the architectural context portion of the report. She said the reason that she revised the report was to reflect better the River's House compared to some of the other stone buildings within the district. She said she is still working to separate the criterion context of the House. She explained that she is making sure that the relationship with the person of interest criterion is separated from the architectural significance criterion. She said in her first draft, she had them combined. She said she separated them to make them clearer for the nomination.

Chair Plaag said that Ms. McCorkle had recently sent out the second draft of the landmark report to Staff. Ms. Mitchell said that Staff received it too late to get it into the meeting packet, and the Staff would place the draft landmark report on the next HPC Advisory meeting agenda for the HPC to review it.

Council Liaison Roseman explained that the Council is anxious to read the draft landmark report and find out what will become of the property. She said the Council wants to see the property become a highlight of the Downtown Corridor that helps pull the Historic District altogether. She asked Chair Plaag if there was a way that he could assure that some elements are in the landmark report that will preserve the history while allowing a new use.

Chair Plaag explained the most difficult thing about adaptively reusing that property is how one balances historic preservation with the new use. He explained that retailers do not want their building broken up into small rooms, instead, they want to see large spaces. He explained that the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) would say you cannot take out the walls on the interior of the building if you want to preserve it. He said the walls define the space in the rooms historically, and you have to figure out how to use your adaptively reused store space while leaving the primary wall and the things that historically define the space. He said the interior is less of an issue because we don't, generally speaking, dedicate interiors in the local landmark process. He said an exception is the Downtown Boone Post Office because the interior is so unusual with the mural and what remains of the original Post Office operations. He added that landscaping is more challenging. He talked about adaptively reusing the landscaping that still conveys visually to a visitor of the site what this property might have been like while also allowing for those new uses.

Chair Plaag pointed out that if the Town proposes to make the Rivers Property a landmark, any work will be presented to the HPC for their review of a COA. He said he did not want to pre-dictate what those outcomes would be by giving an opinion on them. He gave an example that if the Town decided they wanted to keep the general bowl shape of the area where Rachel's Meadow was and they wanted to make it a concrete amphitheater with fixed seats in it. He said this idea might not pass the approval of the SHPO if it was a National Register of Historic Places or tax credit property. He said a way to pass approval by the SHPO is to look at ways to approach the addition of an amphitheater and to retain the natural slope and appearance of it without the use of concrete.

Chair Plaag stated that he is careful to speak about specifics on what may or not be allowed for this property. He pointed out that standards will need to be written for the Rivers Property. He said the HPC would need to discuss what needs to be preserved on the property, and that the landmark report will cover this topic.

Council Liaison Roseman voiced that this is the beginning of what might be possibly done on the Rivers Property and is not the end to all progress. Chair Plaag stated that he would like to contact Ms. Kristi Brantley from the SHPO to request examples of local landmarks that have been adaptively reused by municipalities. He said this would be helpful to gather specific examples of what other towns have done well. Council Liaison Roseman stated that the information that Chair Plaag wants to obtain would be helpful to the Council as they review other proposed landmarks in the historic district.

Member Watkins talked about the Duke University area, where there are a lot of adaptive reuses in the residential areas, which are various kinds of law offices and other types of offices. He said it might be interesting to see how this area made this type of transition. Chair Plaag said that universities loathe allowing historic preservation designation of residences that they have bought because they feel like it ties their hands. He said there are exceptions to it, but the university wants to be able to do whatever they want to with their buildings. He noted that there had been some university buildings that were adaptively reused but not in the best way.

Ms. McCorkle left the meeting at approximately 4:30 p.m.

STAFF UPDATES

Chair Plaag asked Ms. Mitchell if the Junaluska Heritage Association (JHA) contacted the Town Manager or Town Staff about the proposal that they submitted regarding the fieldstones on the fence line in the Boone Cemetery. Ms. Mitchell said that the JHA had sent Town Staff their proposal for the fieldstone markers sometime before the end of 2022. She said she forwarded their proposal to Ms. Amy Davis, Town Manager, and Mr. Moody for their review. She said that the Town had given the JHA approval to move forward with their proposal to finish up with the remaining fieldstones in the cemetery. Ms. Mitchell said that the JHA was informed last week of this approval. She thought the JHA would contact the Public Works Department if they needed anything from them during this process.

Chair Plaag asked Ms. Mitchell if the JHA had a good understanding of where the fence line in the cemetery is located because the fence is not there anymore to show them where to put the fieldstones. Ms. Mitchell explained that the JHA did not submit a site plan or specific details of where they were to install the fieldstones, but she could contact them and ask them if they understood where the fence line is in the cemetery. Chair Plaag said that he had an understanding of where the fence line location is in the cemetery. He said he could meet at the cemetery either with a representative of the JHA or a Public Works Department employee to show them where the line is located. Ms. Mitchell said she would contact JHA Members, Ms. Roberta Jackson, and Dr. Sue O'Keefe to see if they are clear on where the line in the cemetery is located and include Chair Plaag in the response from them.

Ms. Mitchell informed the HPC that Ms. Kristi Brantley from SHPO is available on April 12, 2023, to conduct the CLG orientation from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. She said that Ms. Brantley did not say if the other individuals from SHPO were going to attend the orientation. She said she would keep the HPC updated through email on the orientation. She noted that the orientation would be held in a hybrid format. She said that the Town of Boone Planning and Inspections Department would host the in-person orientation at the Planning

and Inspections office. Chair Plaag polled the HPC members and most of the HPC members were able to attend the orientation, including Council Liaison Roseman, via WebEx. Chair Plaag confirmed with Ms. Mitchell that for the HPC members attending this orientation, it would count as a CLG training session for this federal year. She added that for the other CLG training credits, the HPC could watch some of the SHPO's YouTube videos either together or on their own. She said each HPC member would complete a summary form stating when it came time to complete the CLG training credits.

Ms. Mitchell informed the HPC that she had submitted an action request form to Town Council to be considered at their meeting this week for the Hayes-Bryan-Greene Cemetery Historic Marker ceremony to be held on June 2, 2023, at 1 p.m. She said the request included the road closure for the ceremony. She said at the next HPC meeting, she would let the HPC know of Town Council's decision on the ceremony.

Chair Plaag said in the past, at these types of ceremonies, there have been remarks from the Mayor and by Chair Plaag. Chair Plaag asked the HPC if anyone wanted to create and deliver the remarks at this ceremony on behalf of the HPC. There was no interest from the other HPC members to create and present remarks at the ceremony. Chair Plaag asked for an HPC member to make a motion and vote for him to create and make the remarks at the ceremony since no other HPC member wanted to do it.

Motion and Vote:

Member Watkins made a motion, seconded by Member Sharp to authorize Chair Plaag to create and make the remarks at the Hayes-Bryan-Greene Cemetery historical marker unveiling on June 2, 2023, at 1 p.m.

Vote: Aye – Nay

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Chair Plaag explained to Student Member Ziegler that he encouraged the HPC members to attend the historical marker unveiling ceremonies, including the Hayes-Bryan-Greene Cemetery ceremony. Student Member Ziegler noted that she might be taking an internship out of town at the time of the June 2nd ceremony. Chair Plaag asked Ms. Mitchell to tell the HPC when Student Member Ziegler's term would end. Ms. Mitchell said it would end on June 30, 2023. She said this student position would be advertised approximately a month before the term expires, and that Student Member Ziegler could apply again for this same position. Student Member Ziegler noted that she would be graduating in December of this year. Chair Plaag encouraged Student Member Ziegler to re-apply for this position after it expires, even if she cannot fulfill the full one-year term.

Ms. Mitchell discussed Appendix D revisions. She explained her review included Appendix D text regarding the COA application design review process and the steps that the applicant takes. She said she is trying to write those steps more concisely to make the applicant more aware of what is required of them and what they could expect during the hearing. She said Staff is basing these proposed changes on what they have learned so far since the beginning of the COA process. She said Staff would incorporate the table of minor and major works and create flow charts to make the process more descriptive. She explained her thoughts about making a separate document to include the revised language. She asked the HPC if they had any questions or concerns about what she is doing to let her know along the way as she continues to work on proposed changes to Appendix D.

Ms. Mitchell talked about the next topics that she would review in Appendix D. She said she would review the commercial standards. She said she would review the text for residential standards towards the end

of the review of Appendix D. She informed the HPC that reviewing Appendix D would take time as Staff is also in the Comprehensive Plan update process; she was not sure of a time frame of when she would be presenting text to the HPC.

Ms. Mitchell informed the HPC that Staff has and will continue to divide the agendas and packets for the Advisory meeting and the Quasi-Judicial meeting. She asked the HPC to let the Staff know if they had any questions about this change of the agendas and packets.

Ms. Mitchell said that Staff had finalized the list of the HPC's recommendations for the Doc and Merle Watson Mural, and she had forwarded them to Ms. Paige Henderson, Downtown Boone Development Coordinator. Ms. Mitchell said that Ms. Henderson would be presenting these recommendations to Council, and they have been submitted to Town Council for their next meeting. Ms. Mitchell told the HPC that Staff had contacted the applicant and given them the recommendations for the proposed mural. She said that as she worked with the applicant and Ms. Henderson, she made sure that they were aware of everything they needed to submit, including a final rendering for final Council approval.

Chair Plaag reminded Ms. Mitchell of a previous discussion where the HPC asked Staff to give them updates on all Statement of Conformity applications that were received by the Planning and Inspections Department. He asked Ms. Mitchell if she remembered what the HPC and Staff decided on how often they would inform the HPC on any Statement of Conformity applications. She said she could search through the meeting minutes to try to find out the decision that was made. She said she would ask Ms. Christy Turner, Senior Planner, who does the reviews for the Statement of Conformity applications, to give an update at the April advisory meeting. Ms. Mitchell suggested that Staff give an update every month.

HPC MEMBER UPDATES

Chair Plaag explained that the HPC does have some work plan topics that they are working on but there has not been any progress to report on them in the last month.

APRIL ADVISORY SESSION MATERIAL

Ms. Mitchell explained to the HPC that it would really help Staff be more efficient to know the agenda items prior to the next meeting. There was consensus from the HPC to outline the agenda items for each meeting.

Chair Plaag stated the following agenda items for the April meeting: HPC Intern Clay Rivers Landmark Report Update, Boone Cemetery Fieldstone Line Update of the JHA's Project, and Staff Updates on the Hayes-Bryan-Greene Cemetery Marker. Chair Plaag said he would consult with Ms. Mitchell on other topics for discussion before the next advisory meeting. Ms. Mitchell added that she would continue to email the HPC about one week from the advisory meeting date to ask for agenda items prior to the posting of the advisory meeting packet.

OTHER DISCUSSION

There were no other topics discussed at this meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice-Chair Bond made a motion, seconded by Student Member Ziegler, to adjourn the meeting at 4:58 p.m.

Vote: Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Eric Plaag, Chair

Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary

R.L. CLAY/R.C. RIVERS HOUSE (WTO53O)

I. General information

A. Common and Historical Property Names

1. R.L. Clay House (Ca.1933-1945)
2. R.C. Rivers House (Ca. 1945-today)

B. Physical Address or Location

1. 150 Clay House Dr, Boone, NC 28607
 - a) North elevation faces Rivers St.

C. Tax Parcel Identification Number (PIN)

1. Parcel ID: 2900-78-3934-000
2. Parcel ID: 2900-69-9070-000

D. Current Owner Name

1. Current Owner is the Town of Boone and has been since the donation of the house and property in 1998. There was a life tenant included with that deed that left the property in 2011. It has been uninhabited since and used for storage.

E. Current Owner(s) Mailing Address(es)

1. 567 W King St, Boone, NC 28607

F. Appraised Value of the Property 2022

1. Parcel ID 2900-78-3934-000: Total value \$682,200. Land value is \$55,300 and building value is \$626,900.
2. Parcel ID 2900-69-9070-000; Land value of \$821,100.

G. Date of Construction

1. Circa 1933 House
2. Circa 1945 Garage

H. Historical Significance

1. Criterion B: Association with Person(s) 1945-1998
2. Criterion C: Architectural Significance c.1933

II. Abstract

This property is being designated for local historical landmark due to the significance it has in regard to those influential in the town of Boone and for its architecture. The building is of stone construction built in approximately 1933, this is considered unique for the location and time of construction. Members of the Rivers family resided in and owned the home for more than 50 years as they ran the local newspaper, the *Watauga Democrat*. R.C. Rivers Jr. ran the *Watauga Democrat* for 42 years, 30 years of that while residing in this home. Rachel Rivers-Coffey, the granddaughter of R.C. Rivers Sr, daughter of R.C. Rivers Jr., was raised in the home before she went on to take over the *Watauga Democrat* after her father passed. She is responsible for the donation of the property to the Town of Boone in 1998. These factors create a high significance at a local level.

The buildings included in this designation are the one and a half-story native stone house and the two-story native stone garage to the south-east of the home. Two legal parcels are proposed for designation. This is not all of the land once associated with the property as the

surrounding parcels are undeveloped though still owned by the Town of Boone thanks to donations from the Rivers and Coffey families. There is a prize Sugar Maple, *Baby*, on an adjoining parcel to the west that once was owned by the Rivers', this parcel is owned by the Town of Boone. The parcel proposed for designation continues to provide historic context for the close relationship the Rivers family had to the town and community of Boone.

III. Architectural Description

The R.L. Clay House is one and a half-story, side-gabled home with natural cut stone exterior. It is three bays wide and built to face north, towards the present day Rivers Street. This would have historically been facing north towards Water Street, now Burrell Street. Access to the property is via a long, circuitous driveway, known as Clay House Drive off of Moretz Drive to the southeast. The property retains a one and a half-story two bay garage that also features natural cut stone exterior. This garage is located at the end of Clay House Drive and just to the southeast of the house. Walkways, outside stairwells, retaining walls, and curbing throughout the property are also of natural cut stone and apparently part of the original landscaping plan. The roof of the house, until recently, was composed of asbestos shingles designed to resemble slate, but these were probably not original. These were removed in 2015 and replaced with more traditional asphalt shingles.

The north (front) facade of the Clay/Rivers home features an irregular, front gabled porch entrance that is reached by stone steps with stone cheek walls. The entrance to the porch features a flat arch lintel with a gothic-style light above, and the interior of the porch includes a stone bench on the east side of the porch with two rectangular window openings on either side of the porch. Wood weatherboard was used for the interior porch ceiling. The main entrance features a twelve-light wooden door that is protected by an aluminum screen door. This entrance is not used for interior access by the Town of Boone. Immediately to the east of the porch is a prominent exterior stone chimney with alternating steps that narrow the chimney as it rises. There is a pale stone diamond in the center of the chimney, a stone feature that is continued throughout the design of the home, interior and exterior. The chimney includes a pronounced concrete cap with brick pier at the four corners. Further to the east of the chimney and porch on the first floor is a double set of six-over-six, double hung sash windows with a wooden surround, aluminum storm windows and stone sills. Beyond this to the east, the first floor of the north elevation opens to a square interior porch with stone flooring and walls with wooden weatherboard ceiling. This is all anchored to the footprint of the house by a stone column at the northeast corner of the porch.

The porch includes one wooden doorway along the interior south wall at the southwest corner of the porch, with another similar door at the same corner along the west wall of the porch. This west wall entrance is used as the main entrance by the Town of Boone. Both doors are covered with aluminum screen doors. To the north of the second door, still on the west wall of the porch, is a single six-over-six double-hung sash, wooden window with a wooden surround, a stone sill and an aluminum storm window protecting it. A gothic light fixture hangs at the center of this interior porch space, some of the glass panels are broken and missing.

Visible under each window grouping on the north elevation are two basement-level vents. The west side of the north elevation has a triple bay of six-over-six double-hung sash, wooden windows with wooden surrounds and a stone sill. All three are covered with aluminum storm windows. The second floor of the north elevation features two projecting, symmetrically spaced gabled dormers, each clad in weatherboard on their sides and what appear to be shingles on the gable fronts. This shingle material may be of asbestos that has since been painted.

The dormers themselves include prominent cornice returns with double sets of six-over-six, double hung sash, wooden windows with wooden surrounds and aluminum storm windows over them. Small vents are visible just below the apexes of these dormer gables. The first floor of the west elevation, reading from north to south, is primarily of native stone and includes a single six-over-six, double-hung sash, wooden window with an aluminum storm window covering. A short distance to the south is an identical window. Near the center of the elevation, but offset slightly to the south, is a smaller double window group of six-over-six, double-hung sash, wooden window with a wooden surround, stone sill, and an aluminum storm window coverings. A short distance to the south of this is a single window that is otherwise identical to those found in the double window grouping. Just above this window, the south end of the gable roofline abruptly evens out to accommodate an enclosed porch that includes another double set of windows identical to those at the center of the west elevation, with a small amount of the same asbestos shingle treatment visible between the tops of the windows and the roofline, while the bulkhead below the windows is parging over an unknown material (possibly concrete block).

At ground level are three basement vents with stone lintels and stone window wells. The second floor of the west elevation includes a double set of the windows at an intermediate size between the small and large examples found elsewhere on the west elevation, but otherwise identical in their design and treatment. This set is centered underneath the west gable. The roofline of the west gable includes an aluminum boxed soffit that sports an oddly shaped cornice return only at the northwest corner of the house.

The south elevation of the house is irregularly shaped. Reading from west to east, the first floor of the south elevation is dominated by the three-season enclosed porch that runs nearly to the center of the back of the house. This porch continues the parged bulkhead treatment, with a centered, four-light door with an aluminum storm door over it and flanked by double sets of windows like those found on the west elevation of this porch. For reasons that are not clear, the roofline of this porch steps down near its junction with a second floor window, perhaps in effort to not block that window. The east return wall of this rear porch repeats the asbestos shingling for a short distance below the roof slope, with the bulkhead treatment taking up the whole east return wall. At its base is a set of stone steps with a stone stairwell wall leading down to a basement door with an aluminum storm door. This door is not visible from the interior of the basement, indicating that it leads to a separate storage space under the home. Above this, along the main body of the house is a double set of large six-over-six double-hung sash, wooden windows with a wooden surround, stone sill, and aluminum storm windows. Above this, the

second floor of the main block of the house reads as a wide dormer. At its center is a medium-sized, double window grouping otherwise identical to those found elsewhere with a single window of similar size just to the west, over the stepped down porch roof. A much smaller window, also otherwise identical, is visible to the east of this centered, double window group. This wide dormer features wooden weatherboard on the west and east sides of the dormer. A stone interior chimney rises from a high point of the south-facing roof at a junction with the west side of the south dormer, while another interior chimney rises from the east side of the south-facing roof, separated by a short distance from the south dormer.

Back at the first level is another projection at the southeast corner of the house, with a small, single, one-over-one horizontal light, wooden window with a stone sill and aluminum storm window over it on the west elevation of this projection. A large, single window like most of the others on the house is centered on the south elevation of this southeast projection. Along this south elevation of the house about ten feet from the back of the house, is a long, stone retaining wall that runs parallel with the house to a set of stone steps with a stone creek wall and an iron railing just beyond the southwest corner of the house. This retaining wall continues a short distance, parallel with the west elevation of the house.

The first floor of the east elevation, moving from south to north, includes a large window like those found elsewhere followed a short distance to the north by a large double window group like those found elsewhere. A short distance to the north of this is a set of stone steps with stone cheek walls on each side and an iron railing along the top of the north cheek wall. This set of steps leads to the aforementioned open, interior porch at the northeast corner of the house. The second floor of the east elevation features a medium-sized, double set of windows identical to those on the west elevation, centered just below the gable. A boxed aluminum soffit terminates in prominent cornice returns at both ends of the roofline. Leading away from the porch steps is a cut stone pathway, with the iron rising continuing along its length. This terminates at a step down to the asphalt driveway, which is itself bounded on its west and south sides by a low, stone retaining wall.

At the southeast end of this driveway is a detached, front gables, one and a half-story two car garage of cut stone. Its north elevation includes the two symmetrically spaced garage bay doors of vertical wood slats, with a large six-over-six, double-hung sash, wooden window with wooden surround and stone lintel centered beneath the gable. The roof line includes an aluminum boxed soffit that terminated in prominent cornice returns. The west and east of the garage are essentially featureless stone while the south elevation, which is built partially on a grade includes a set of wooden steps rising to the upper level of the garage, which is accessed via wooden door with a deep wooden surround. The roofline on the gable end also includes an aluminum, boxed soffit that terminated in prominent cornice returns.¹

There is a low, creekstone retaining wall along the sloping edge of the north portion of the property, facing Rivers Street. The wall was likely more prominent when first constructed but

¹ Architectural description has been taken entirely, with minor adjustments, from Plaag, Dr. Eric W.; Fuller, Paul; Holladay, Nicole; Hamilton, Carson. "Comprehensive Architectural Survey of Downtown Boone, North Carolina." (PDF, Boone, NC, February 2021.) Pg 97-104. <https://dcr.lib.unc.edu/record/>

has since been obscured by overgrowth and has partially collapsed. It appears to have been placed to aid in landscaping for the rhododendrons that grow along its top.

On the north east corner of the larger parcel being designated there is a monument and small park, Rivers Park, that will be included in this designation. The monument is a stone column with a metal obelisk on top, together they stand at approximately 10 feet tall. This marker is a replica of one built twice before meant to denote where a cabin once stood nearby that may have been inhabited by Daniel Boone at some point. There is a circular cement platform around this monument with benches denoting the name of the park. No known archaeological features on the property are known at this time.

The integrity of the association between this property and those who lived there is undivided and uninterrupted in their lifetimes until the property was transferred to the Town of Boone for its protection. The home itself has never been moved and is still associated with much of the original acreage the Rivers would have enjoyed. The addition of the two car garage Circa 1940s, possibly after the Rivers acquired the property, denotes the affluence of the owners of the home in the mid-twentieth century. In approximately the 1970s, the alteration of the south porch from an open to an enclosed porch occurred. While the materials used do not match the stone work of the rest of the house, these changes were made by the Rivers family so it does not detract from the property's significance. The materials of the home's exterior siding are original and in good condition, the roof was replaced recently on both the house and the garage. The aluminum storm windows are not original to the home and are in fair condition to protect the original windows that are still in place. As the home has remained largely unchanged, excepting the south porch, there is little that detracts from the integrity of the home.

The proposed boundaries of the designation follow the surveyed boundaries for parcels 2900783934000 and 2900699070000. The boundaries for parcel 2900783934000 are as follows: "Beginning at rebar located S 35-55-45 W 172.98 feet from a R.R. spike in the paved shoulder of Rivers Street, thence from said point of Beginning N 35-55-45 E to a calculated point in the Southeastern corner of Lot 1 of the Phillips Addition, thence with the Southern boundary lines of Lots 1-5 of the Phillips Addition S 49-47 E to a calculated point, said point being N 49-47 W 100 feet from a P.K. nail in the East margin of Moretz Street, thence S 41-54 W 104.65 feet to a computed point; thence N 40-32 W 116.64 feet to a calculated point and point of Beginning."² The boundaries for parcel 2900699070000 are described in 6 different tracts that amount to 8.15 acres to the north, west, and south of the home. This parcel includes the garage, monument, and Sugar Maple.³

While this does not include all of the property that was once associated with the home, it does include all pertinent buildings associated with the home and its human inhabitants. It includes the house, the garage, drive directly in front of the home and walkways, along with the stone walls closest to the home. The prize winning Sugar Maple, Baby, is also included in this designation along with Rivers Park and its monument.

² Book of Records 480 Page 494. Originally recorded in Book 272 Page 579.

³ Book of Records 480 Page 496-498.

IV. Architectural Context

Built in 1933, this native stone house was originally constructed for Robert Luther “R.L.” Clay (1889-1945), by a local Black brickmason, John L. Hickerson (c1889-1938).⁴ Hickerson was considered “renowned for his masonry work throughout Boone in the 1920s and 1930s.”⁵ A single family dwelling made of native stone by a local Black man would have been notable at the time. Hickerson being noted for his quality of work indicates that he would have been in high demand by those who could afford to create such homes. In June of 1934, a year after Hickerson would have completed the Clay House, “Mr. Ed Luttreall of Shulls Mills [was] erecting a nine-room stone dwelling... J. L. Hickerson [was] taking care of the masonry.” Hickerson was apparently working with the contractor Wiley Gordon “W.G.” Hartzog (1885-1976). Other noted masons who built homes of native stone in the 1930s were the Lyons Brothers, who also worked with Hartzog.⁶ At one time it was believed that the Lyons brothers were also not white, but recent research has indicated that they were caucasian. This makes Hickerson, and his skill set, more unique in the area.

The home was built of native stone, a material that was not considered readily available in Boone at the time of construction, especially during the Great Depression. Private homes constructed of this material were few in number in the community. Other stone buildings in the town were not of cut stone, but of stacked fieldstone in mortar or roughly cut fieldstone. There were the Advent Christian Church, built 1920, and the original Linney Law Office, built 1922, that were made of such stone.⁷ Other stone buildings in the area were Single family dwellings made of native stone became more popular after the mid 1930s. In the summer of 1934, there were single family dwellings being built in the Boone area for Professor J.A. Williams near Appalachian State campus, Mr. R.T. Greer on Boone Trail Highway (now Highway 421), J.E. Holhouser in Daniel Boone Park, Owen Wilson on the western end of King Street, and H.L. Lyons near the Lovill house.⁸ Other stone buildings noted around the time of the Clay House construction was a four story native-stone hospital built in Banner Elk in 1930, built by the same people who constructed stone buildings on the Lees McRae campus in 1926.⁹ These institutional constructions were outside of the county and the only large buildings of stone noted by the *Watauga Democrat* before the 1930s.

⁴ “Real Estate Trade Active: Many Building Projects,” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), Jun. 29, 1933.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

“Local Affairs” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), June 1, 1933. Page 5. <https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

⁵ Plagg, Dr. Eric W.; Fuller, Paul; Holladay, Nicole; Hamilton, Carson. “Comprehensive Architectural Survey of Downtown Boone, North Carolina.” (PDF, Boone, NC, February 2021.) Pg 50.

⁶ “Much Building Now Going on in County” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), June 14, 1934.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

⁷ “Boone Historic Property Survey” (PDF, Boone, NC, 2008), Pages 89, 95 of 144.

⁸ “Much Building Now Going on in County” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), June 14, 1934.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

⁹ “New Hospital at Banner Elk is Near Completion” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), July 24, 1930. <https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

Other buildings that were part of a Historic Property Survey for Boone, completed in 2008, that were made of stone around the time of the construction of the Clay House are noted below. In the late 1920s the Bushnell Cabin was built at what is now 211 Leah Drive in a neighborhood just north of downtown Boone. The stone in this structure is noted as having been from a quarry on nearby Highway 105. This structure was built by Ben L. Smith and does not rival the Clay House in size as this structure is a simple single family home in comparison to the more grand Clay House.¹⁰ Another stone house in Boone that does not rival the Clay House in size or quality would be the Ruby Lanier House, found at what is now 235 Orchard St. This house is a single story cottage/bungalow styled home. This house was built around the 1930s, with no clear architect or mason listed. The brick is not believed to be native.¹¹ Another stone home built around 1930 is the Howard Miller House, found at what is now 150 Delmar St. The survey on this home lists no significant mason. This home is smaller than the Clay House, and the exterior has altered features such as aluminum siding covering original woodwork and stucco, decreasing the historical integrity of the structure.¹² The James E. Holshouser Sr. House, located at what is now 221 Orchard Street, was built in 1934. This is the house that was constructed nearest to the Clay House. This house has stone from a quarry in nearby Shulls Mill, this stone is not cut to provide a flat exterior, instead left rounded to provide a different appearance as seen at the Clay House. While this house may rival the Clay House in its size and quality, the style of this home is Gothic in nature. An Ernest Banner was supposedly the mason for this home.¹³ The W. Ralph Winkler House, built in 1936, is also constructed of stone, though not noted as native stone. This house can be found at 851 Blowing Rock Rd, and has been modified from a residential space to a dentistry office with apartments above it. Alterations include additions to the structure, the enclosure of a one open porch, and unknown extensive interior remodels. Midas Wheeler is listed as the mason in charge, not Hickerson.¹⁴ That same year the W.F. Miller House was built, Midas Wheeler is noted as the mason for this home, this home can be found what is now 243 Cherry Drive. While the cut stone is believed to be local to the area and this exterior can be compared to the Clay House, the original footprint of this home was smaller. After additions to this house in the late 20th century, the integrity of this home does not compare to that of the Clay House.¹⁵ In 1937 a stone house was built for Guy Hunt, found at what is now 286 Orchard Street. The rock work on this home is believed to be done by the Lyons brothers. This house does rival the Clay House in size due to additions to this structure over the years, and the floorplan has been altered.¹⁶ In approximately 1938, the Herman W. Wilcox Home was built. This home can be found at what is now 110 Wallace Circle. This stone home has been

¹⁰ “Boone Historic Property Survey” (PDF, Boone, NC, 2008), Pages 17-18 of 144.

¹¹ Ibid. Pages 61-62 of 144.

¹² Ibid. Pages 84-85 of 144.

¹³ Ibid. Pages 59-60 of 144.

¹⁴ Ibid. Page 9 of 144.

¹⁵ Ibid. Page 75-76 of 144.

¹⁶ Ibid. Pages 67-68 of 144.

altered and expanded several times over the years, causing its integrity to decrease to that significantly less than that of the Clay House.¹⁷

It was not until after the Works Progress Administration that native stone buildings became more popular in Boone, four schools being completed in 1937, and at least six other buildings being built between 1938 and 1939.¹⁸ Stone buildings were considered “not only durable but absolutely fire-proof.”¹⁹ Institutional buildings such as the Post Office, school buildings, and faculty homes, were of stone construction, indicating a ready supply and relatively easy access to the material in large quantities in the later 1930s after government programs allowed for massive mining of stone for buildings. Single family homes constructed of native stone that once stood on Rivers Street, less than a mile east of the Clay House, were constructed for faculty of Appalachian State Teachers College, now Appalachian State University, in 1938.²⁰ All of those homes were moved or destroyed when Rivers Street was widened in the mid 1960s, decreasing and otherwise destroying their architectural integrity.

In the 2021 Downtown Boone Survey there were several native stone buildings listed, all commercial except for the Clay House. The Cook-Nichols Motor Company building, which eventually burned in the 1950s, and the Duncan Motor Company building were both completed in 1940.²¹ The Boone Bus Depot was also a building that was a product of W.G. Hartzog’s men. The native stone facade, completed in 1947, is now a shell that stands alone along the edge of an Appalachian State University building.²² Native stone is noted around downtown Boone, mostly in retaining walls, sheds, and steps that lead to houses that no longer stand.

V. Historical Context

R.L. Clay, for whom the home was originally built in 1933, was a native of Avery County, having moved to Watauga County after the Linville River Railway was built in the late 1910s.²³ He worked at the Shulls Mill station agent until he moved to Boone in the 1920s where he remained working with the railway. The Clay’s did have a home in Boone before the native stone house was built, as there are reports of Mrs. Clay entertaining the Friday Afternoon Club in

¹⁷ Ibid. Pages 69-70 of 144.

¹⁸ “Ellerbe Lauds School Projects” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC) October 26, 1936.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

“\$26,000 Alloted to Local College” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC) February 24, 1938.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

¹⁹ “Lees McRae Institute Opening at Banner Elk” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC) September 16, 1926.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

²⁰ “Faculty Homes are Completed” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC) October 20, 1938.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

²¹ Plagg, Dr. Eric W.; Fuller, Paul; Holladay, Nicole; Hamilton, Carson. “Comprehensive Architectural Survey of Downtown Boone, North Carolina.” (PDF, Boone, NC, February 2021.) Pg 59.

²² Plagg, Dr. Eric W.; Fuller, Paul; Holladay, Nicole; Hamilton, Carson. “Comprehensive Architectural Survey of Downtown Boone, North Carolina.” (PDF, Boone, NC, February 2021.) Pg 64.

²³ “Brief Illness Proves Fatal to R. Luther Clay,” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), Mar. 29, 1945.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

her home in May of 1931.²⁴ This original home was a simple wooden farm house that was a common place construction in the early twentieth century in Boone. The home was moved in order to make space for the native stone building, and was rented out for many years. The home was, unfortunately, destroyed by the Town of Boone in a fire exercise in 2015.²⁵

In 1933 Clay, his wife, Annie Stanbury, and daughters would move to Greensboro so Clay could work with the Internal Revenue Department, now known as the IRS. As this move happened, the stone house was being completed by a local Black brickmason, John L. Hickerson (c1889-1938).²⁶

Hickerson was married to Sallie Shearer Hickerson and had no children. Hickerson had lived in Boone since approximately 1921, having originated in Yadkin Valley. Hickerson was a known Black stone mason in Boone who had his own crew of workmen; these men erected “almost all the newer brick structures of the town,” by 1938.²⁷ On the Clay House, Hickerson is noted as working with Wiley Gordan “W.G.” Hartzog (1885-1976). Hartzog was a former teacher turned contractor, teaching as late as 1917, probably retiring in the early 1920s and contracting as early as 1923.²⁸ In 1921, he was called “one of Watauga’s best mechanics,” by the *Watauga Democrat*.²⁹ Hickerson may have been on one of the first crews Hartzog undertook, having been in town for about two years by 1923. This would allow him several years to hone his skills and become well known in the region by 1933. Hartzog was also the city’s Postmaster from 1934 until at least 1941.³⁰ This would mean he was a local contractor with stone masons at the time the WPA native-stone Post Office was constructed on King Street in the late 1930s.

The home was maintained as a summer and weekend residence for the family. Mrs. Clay would entertain in the home regularly while she and her daughters were in town based on multiple articles regarding the Friday Afternoon Club.³¹ In 1943, Clay was promoted to the Field Division Chief in the Greensboro office of the IRS. When Clay was in residence in Boone he

²⁴ “Friday Afternoon Club with Mrs. R.L. Clay,” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), May 21, 1931.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

²⁵ “Local Affairs” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), June 1, 1933. Page 5. <https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/> Plagg, Dr. Eric W.; Fuller, Paul; Holladay, Nicole; Hamilton, Carson. “Comprehensive Architectural Survey of Downtown Boone, North Carolina.” (PDF, Boone, NC, February 2021.) Pg 97.

²⁶ “Brief Illness Proves Fatal to R. Luther Clay,” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), Mar. 29, 1945.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

Plagg, Dr. Eric W.; Fuller, Paul; Holladay, Nicole; Hamilton, Carson. “Comprehensive Architectural Survey of Downtown Boone, North Carolina.” (PDF, Boone, NC, February 2021.) Pg 50.

²⁷ “John Hickerson Dies on Sunday” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), October 13, 1938.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

²⁸ “Mr. and Mrs. Hartzog Entertain Former Pupils” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC) May 8, 1924. Page 3.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn82007642/>

“Local Affairs” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC) November, 1923. https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn82007642

²⁹ “Furniture Factory For Boone” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC) January 13, 1921. Page 3.

https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn82007642

³⁰ “Doughton Asks that Hartzog be Postmaster” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC) May 24, 1934.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

“Christmas Seals Now Being Used” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC) November 27, 1941.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

³¹ “Alice Stransbury Taylor Circle Holds Meeting,” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), July 4, 1935 Page 5.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

was an active Free Mason and Shriner. He was a member of the Boone Methodist Church, where he served as the Sunday school superintendent for two years and as steward for many more. While in Greensboro Clay was a member of the West Market Street Methodist Church.³²

In early 1945 Clay fell ill and passed away after complications following an appendix operation at 55 years old.³³ After Clay passed his family remained in Greensboro and the Boone home was sold to local newspaper owner and editor, Robert Campbell “R.C.” Rivers Jr. (1899-1975) and his wife Bonnie Jean Lewis (1910-1991). R.C. Rivers Jr. had come to be the editor and publisher of the *Watauga Democrat* and the owner of Rivers Publishing by this time, having inherited the company from his father in 1933. The deed transferring the property from the Clay family to the River family has proven very difficult to find as most deeds in the area, and at the time, list large tracts with multiple holders, not denoting structures on the properties.

R.C. Rivers Jr. had inherited the *Watauga Democrat* from his father, R.C. Rivers Sr. (1861-1933) upon the elder’s passing in 1933. R.C. Rivers Sr. was born in 1861 in Tennessee. He moved to Boone at some point, marrying Sarah Locke “Sallie” Journey (1861-1924) in 1892, after which they had 3 children, R.C. Jr. being the eldest surviving son. Rivers Sr. purchased the *Watauga Democrat*, the local paper that had flopped after the first fall edition, from Joseph Spainhour and John S. Williams in 1889. Rivers Sr. initially purchased the paper with D.B. Doughtry but bought out his partner by the end of 1889. He continued to print the paper and run this business until his death in 1933.³⁴

Having lived in the apartment above the brick print shop located at what is today 747 W King Street since its construction in 1937, R.C. Rivers Jr. and wife Bonnie Jean Rivers, and their children, could relocate down the street and still be close to the business.³⁵ That building has since been changed dramatically since its time as a printer to better fit the restaurant that now occupies the lower level. The Rivers family had a daughter, Lucinda Jane Rivers (1935-2017) before moving into the stone home. There were two children born to Bonnie Jean and R.C. Jr between 1939 and 1940 that were unnamed and would not survive infancy.³⁶ They would go on to have one more surviving child in 1943, Rachel Ann Rivers (1943-1999). She was born at the Hagaman Clinic that was once on King Street in downtown Boone. The Riverses kept horses in the acreage to the west of their home, an area that once covered at least 13 acres. Rachel Rivers was known as an able equestrian from a very young age. She wrote her first piece for the *Watauga Democrat* at 11 years old.³⁷

³²“Brief Illness Proves Fatal to R. Luther Clay,” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), Mar. 29, 1945.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

³³“Brief Illness Proves Fatal to R. Luther Clay,” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), Mar. 29, 1945.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

³⁴“History of The Watauga Democrat” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), Jan 3, 2012, Updated August 11, 2014.

<https://www.wataugademocrat.com/aboutus/history-of-the-watauga-democrat/article>

³⁵“Hands Across the State,” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), Jul. 21, 1938. <https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

³⁶ Book of Vital Records 26 page 190-191 and Book of Vital Records 27 page 222.

³⁷ Brad Hodges. “Former newspaper publisher dies after falling from horse: Rachel Rivers-Coffey was long-time county civic leader,” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), August 25, 1999.

Circa mid 1940s, a separate two-car garage with upstairs storage space was added south-east of the home and made to resemble the stone work of the home.³⁸ This garage may have been built along with the house, as the stone work is identical but there is no recorded mention of its construction at or after the construction of the house. The Rivers family kept a housekeeper from Beaver Dam, a white woman named Mabel Moody Mixon (1926-2013), in their employ for 18 years while living in the stone home.³⁹ This was probably between 1945 and 1965. With two children in the house and a husband with a full time job as well as a job herself on staff at the *Watauga Democrat*, this time range is when Mrs. Rivers may have most benefited from having an extra hand around the house.

Rivers Publishing Company purchased the *Blowing Rocket* in 1956, a paper publishing seasonal reporting from Blowing Rock since 1936. The *Rocket* began being printed weekly under Rivers Jr. Rachel Rivers would go out of state to gain a college degree in journalism, working for the *Watauga Democrat* upon her return. At some point the south porch was enclosed and carpeted to make a laundry room.

Rachel Rivers married Paul Armfield Coffey in 1965.⁴⁰ Both worked for the paper before their marriage, Rachel Rivers having been a photographer, writer, and editor while Coffey was a journalist and photographer. After their marriage Rivers-Coffey and Coffey continued to work at the *Watauga Democrat* and provide news to their community. Rivers Publishing Company purchased the *Avery Journal* and began printing it in 1972, expanding the empire outside of Watauga County. R.C. Rivers Jr. passed away from colon cancer, having lived with the disease for two years, in 1975.⁴¹ Upon his death the *Watauga Democrat* and Rivers Publishing Company was inherited by Rivers-Coffey and her husband.

The house and land itself was under the ownership of Bonnie Jean Lewis Rivers after the death of her husband, Rivers Jr. She held the property, and is assumed to have lived there, until her death in 1991.⁴² Upon the death of her mother, Rachel Rivers-Coffey acquired the land and would hold it for only a few years until she sold it to the Town of Boone in October 1998. During this time Rivers-Coffey and her husband ran the paper until 1994 when they sold it to the owners of the *Bristol Herald-Courier* who then sold it to Art and Fran Powers a few years later. At this point the group of publications was titled the Watauga Newspapers Group. Jones Media then bought all the papers in 2002. This group still runs the *Watauga Democrat*, *Avery Journal*, *Blowing Rocket*, and other local publications such as the *Mountain Times*.⁴³

As a condition of selling the home to the Town of Boone, Rivers-Coffey and Coffey included restrictions to the property and its future use by the Town of Boone. Jim Butler, who resided in the home, was allowed a life-estate as well. He passed in 2011, leaving the home

³⁸Palmer Blair, "Aerial View of Boone from the East, 1950," *Digital Watauga*, accessed January 15, 2023, <https://digitalwatauga.org/items/show/6032>.

³⁹ Brad Hodges. "The Page Turns," *Watauga Democrat*, (Boone, NC) August 27, 1999.

⁴⁰ Book of Vital Records 1965, pg 889.

⁴¹"Publisher R.C. River Jr. Dies; End brought to Unique Career" *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC) April 24, 1975.

⁴² Book of Records 272 Pages 585-597. Will executed December 23, 1993.

⁴³"History of The Watauga Democrat" *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), Jan 3, 2012, Updated August 11, 2014. <https://www.wataugademocrat.com/aboutus/history-of-the-watauga-democrat/article>

empty as it sits today. The restrictions placed on the property are as follows; “The Grantor covenants with the Grantee that the Grantor is seized of the premises in fee simple, and has the right to convey the same in fee simple, that title is marketable and free and clear of all encumbrances other than those exceptions set forth below, and that the Grantor will warrant and defend the title against the lawful claims of all persons whomsoever except for the exceptions hereinafter stated... 1. Recreational purposes. 2. Green space. 3. The installation of utility lines, provided however, that all lines must be installed underground, and in such a way so as to cause a minimum disturbance to the natural environment. 4. Flood mitigation. 5. A wildlife sanctuary. [And] 6. Historical purposes.”⁴⁴

Two parcels historically associated with the home surround the current parcel it stands on. The smaller parcel to the southeast (2900-78-3881-000) was donated to the Town of Boone by Paul Armfield Coffey in 2004. This parcel originally contained the small frame house that appears to have been the original R.L. Clay House that previously stood on the 1933 Clay House site, but was moved in late 1932 to make way for construction of the newer stone building.⁴⁵ This house was burned and then demolished by the Town of Boone on May 30, 2015 as part of a firefighting training exercise after attempts to sell or relocate the house failed. The second parcel (2900-69-9070-000) is located to the north, west, and south of the house and contains what was once the horse pasture for Rachel Rivers-Coffey’s horses, this parcel is approximately 8 acres and is also owned by the Town of Boone. This parcel contains “Baby” a sugar maple that is on the North Carolina Register of Big Trees. There is a wrought iron fence surrounding the giant tree and a large plaque on the southwest fence that states the title of North Carolina Champion Big Tree is held by the maple. On this same parcel the reconstructed Daniel Boone Monument (WT0567) stands in the northeast corner. This monument was reconstructed for a second time at this location in the early 2000s. Two of three additional adjacent parcels to the northwest, along Poplar Grove Road, owned by the Town of Boone were donated by Paul Armfield Coffey with deed restrictions similar to those attached to the home. The property was surveyed in 1988, 2005, and 2021 as part of National Register Nominations regarding Downtown Boone.

VI. Assessment

The Clay/Rivers House is associated with both Robert Campbell (R.C.) Rivers Jr. and Rachel Rivers-Coffey. These two individuals were part of the Rivers Publishing Company that published the only newspaper in Boone, the *Watauga Democrat*. Between these individuals, they ran the paper for 61 years between 1933-1994 not including the time that they worked under others for the *Watauga Democrat* before and after that time period. Rivers Jr. was responsible for the growth of the paper outside of Boone city limits, acquiring both the *Blowing Rocket* and the *Avery Journal*. He took the *Watauga Democrat* from an eight page weekly publication to one that averaged forty pages twice a week. He was a member of the Board of Directors of Northwestern Bank of Boone, vice president of the Watauga Savings and Loan association until 1974, was a

⁴⁴ Record Book 280 Page 292, October 29, 1998.

⁴⁵ “Local Affairs” *Watauga Democrat*. (Boone, NC.) June 1, 1933. Page 5. <https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

member of the Board of Directors of the North Carolina Press Association, and was director of the Journalism Foundation at UNC Chapel Hill. He served as a delegate to the National Democratic Conventions of 1944, 1952, 1956, and 1960, known as one of the Dirty Dozen who stood for the nomination of later president Jack Kennedy. His comments on the assassination of Kennedy were published in the *Watauga Democrat* and entered into the Congressional Record by Senator Sam Ervin.⁴⁶

Rachel Rivers-Coffey is responsible for the preservation of the Town of Boone Cemetery and consolidating the historically Black and white sections of the cemetery. Rivers-Coffey helped found the Watauga Humane Society in 1969 along with future mayor Velma Burnley. She was a member of the Watauga County Hospital Board and the Foundation Board. Rivers-Coffey was also on the board of Historic Boone and the Watauga County Foundation. She was a member of the Save Cape Hatteras Lighthouse Committee. She helped propel the Doc and Merle Watson Mountain Folk Art Museum in Cove Creek, which opened in early 1999. She was involved with launching the first Firefly Festival in Boone through a contest in Southern Farmers Almanac. Rivers-Coffey was president of the North Carolina Press Association in 1994 and 1995. She published two books, *The City Man* and *A Horse Like Mr. Ragman*. Rivers-Coffey and her family had agreed to sponsor a professorship in creative writing at nearby Appalachian State University in the months before her untimely death. She is also responsible for the continued existence and preservation of the Clay/Rivers House, having donated the home to the Town of Boone in 1998.⁴⁷

Rivers Jr. raised his family in the home while managing and expanding the *Watauga Democrat* and Rivers Publishing Company. Rivers-Coffey was born into the home, was raised here, and held the property in high regard, ensuring its preservation after her ownership. She worked at, inherited, and continued to publish the *Watauga Democrat* until she sold the publication. The *Watauga Democrat* is the oldest business in Watauga County under continuous operation.⁴⁸

VII. Supporting documentation

- A. Digital photographs in [drive](#) along with floor plan.
- B. A site plan: In process of photoshopping.

⁴⁶ "Publisher R.C. River Jr. Dies; End brought to Unique Career" *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC) April 24, 1975.

⁴⁷ Brad Hodges. "Former newspaper publisher dies after falling from horse: Rachel Rivers-Coffey was long-time county civic leader," *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), August 25, 1999.

Brad Hodges. "The Page Turns," *Watauga Democrat*, (Boone, NC) August 27, 1999.

⁴⁸ Brad Hodges. "Former newspaper publisher dies after falling from horse: Rachel Rivers-Coffey was long-time county civic leader," *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), August 25, 1999.

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<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

“Mr. and Mrs. Hartzog Entertain Former Pupils” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC) May 8, 1924. Page 3. <https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn82007642/1924-05-08/ed-1/seq-3/>

“Much Building Now Going on in County” *Watauga Democrat*. Boone, NC. June 14, 1934. <https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn82007642/1934-06-14/ed-1/seq-4/Hickerson>

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“Rachel Rivers-Coffey, former Watauga Democrat owner, inducted into WCHS Hall of Fame” *Watuaga Democrat*. Boone, NC. July 25, 2022. Updated September 5, 2022. <https://www.wataugademocrat.com/news/local/rachel-rivers-coffey>

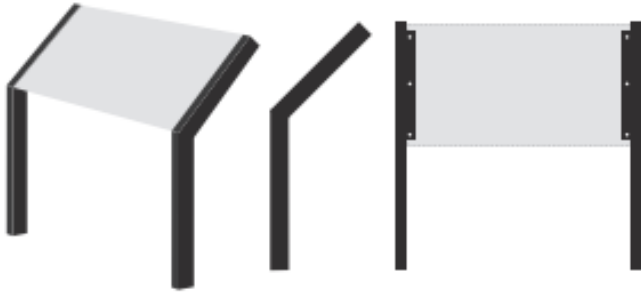
“Real Estate Trade Active: Many Building Projects,” *Watauga Democrat*, Boone, NC. June 29, 1933. <https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn82007642/1933-06-29/ed-1/seq-1/>

Watauga County Register of Deeds. <http://72.15.246.185/watauganc/#1>

Interpretative Panel Example 1 - NPS



Example 1 – Seems comparable to the Vacker Signs NPS Cantilever Style Panel. The one pictured is framed, not frameless.



NPS Cantilever Style Frameless Pedestal - Posts with Flange

A cantilever frameless pedestal for the angle mounting of self supporting panels (.5" thick high pressure laminate panels). An aluminum mounting flange, with pre drilled holes, is welded to a 2" x 3" aluminum cantilevered post. The pre-drilled holes in the flange correspond with tapped or drilled holes in the self supporting panel allowing for fastening by blind mount or thru-bolt.

Flange for Panel Height

18.....	\$392.00
24.....	\$392.00

Pricing based on in ground application.
Add \$63.00 for surface mount plate for surface mount installation.

Sign panel additional, see page 3



Example 1 Panel continued – Panel text and design



Example 1 Panel Continued

This panel is framed and has little debris, at the time the picture was taken. Panel material was not a metal material, but most likely the hard laminate material offered by Vacker Signs. Not pictured is a

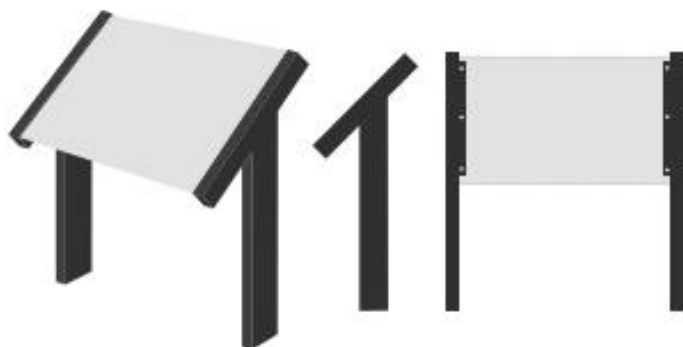


metal sign observed at another location with scratches and gouges, which was illegible to read.

Interpretative Panel Example 2 – Civil War Trails



Example 2 – Seems comparable to the Vacker Signs NPS Traditional Style Panel. The one pictured is framed, not frameless.



NPS Traditional Style Frameless Pedestal - Posts with Flange

A traditional style frameless pedestal for the angle mounting of self supporting panels (.5" thick high pressure laminate panels). A 6" wide support post extends from the center line of an angled aluminum extrusion with a welded pre-drilled mounting flange. The pre-drilled holes in the flange correspond with tapped or drilled holes in the self supporting panel allowing for fastening by blind mount or thru-bolt.

Flange for Panel Height

24.....	\$447.00
30.....	\$532.00
36.....	\$649.00

Pricing based on in ground application.
Add \$63.00 for surface mount plate for surface mount installation.
Sign panel additional, see page 3



Example 2 Panel Continued

This panel is framed and has little debris, at the time the picture was taken. Panel material was most likely the hard laminate material offered by Vacker Signs. There seems to be a coating or another layer



over the panel itself that has caused some distortion in the panel text. Most panel text is still legible.

Example Panel 2 Continued – Cropped image to show marker text and design

