

TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
ADVISORY MEETING MINUTES
April 8, 2025, 3:00 p.m.
Planning & Inspections Department & WebEx Video Conferencing

Historic Preservation Commission Members in Attendance: Vardell Smyth-Chair, Bettie Bond-Vice-Chair, and Ayden Basinger

Council Liaison: Virginia Roseman (via WebEx)

Town Staff in Attendance: Jessica Mitchell-Advanced Planning Specialist, Amy Snider-Commercial Zoning Administrator, Laney Wise-Grants Coordinator/Communications, and Alyson Wuagneux-Board Clerk

Other Town Staff/Representatives Present: Allison Meade-Town Attorney (via Webex)

Call to Order

Chair Smyth called the Boone Historic Preservation Commission meeting held in the Planning & Inspections Conference Room at 680 West King Street and via WebEx to order at 3:02 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

Commission Member Basinger made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Bond, to adopt the agenda.

Vote: Aye – 3
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

150 Clay House Drive – R.L. Clay (Rivers) House – House Bathrooms - Pre-Application Workshop

Ms. Mitchell explained that the intention of the workshop is to provide guidance and is a voluntary and informal process where comments made by the Commission are non-binding. She explained that this workshop is separate from the quasi-judicial meeting. Ms. Mitchell went on to explain that the task for HPC members is to review what is suggested in the packet and provide feedback on preliminary project ideas.

Ms. Laney Wise, Grants Coordinator/Communications, introduced herself and stated that the project is funded through the Accessible Parks Grant Program to renovate the Rivers House detached garage into public restrooms, with the goal of making them as ADA accessible as possible. The program will grant \$250,000 with a \$50,000 match from the Town. Appalachian Architecture has been awarded the project via a master agreement circa 2019. Ms. Wise then directed the conversation to Mr. Bill Dixon of Appalachian Architecture for more details about the project.

Mr. Bill Dixon, architect for the project, explained that the renovation would involve replacing rotten wood on the existing garage doors while making minimal changes to the house. Interior modifications would focus on constructing two public restrooms. He has consulted with Public Utilities regarding installing and adding toilets, water lines, and electrical connections. Plans include running one underground water line and future electrical connections without mounting electrical panels on the building. The exterior rock work of the building remains intact; though adjacent trees will need removal. Excavation around the building is necessary for waterproofing. The upstairs space will be air conditioned, steps replaced, and railing added (not shown in packet material). General discussion between applicants and members on conservation efforts for the

materials on site. Efforts will be made to salvage the garage doors for historical significance after evaluating their condition. Ms. Wise then explained the Town Council process, noting that if the project receives a consensus, Town Council will be updated of the progress as it proceeds to a Quasi-Judicial meeting.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Commission Member Basinger made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Bond, to approve the March 4, 2025, Advisory meeting minutes and the March 11, 2025, Quasi-Judicial meeting minutes as written.

Vote: Aye – 3

Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Approval of Written Decisions

Commission Member Basinger made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Bond, to approve the Written Decision for Case A25-0045 713 W King St – Certificate of Appropriateness and the Written Decision for Case A25-0061 Come Back Shack – Certificate of Appropriateness as written.

Vote: Aye – 3

Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Boone Cemetery Interpretive Panels – Unveiling Ceremony Date Selection

Ms. Mitchell reported that Town Council approved of holding an unveiling ceremony with considerations, including scheduling the ceremony for early May to accommodate student attendance, as well as reaching out to Appalachian State University history students and faculty. Commission members expressed interest in including and contacting the Junaluska Heritage Association.

She explained that Town Council also recommended a cemetery tour at the event. Council member Eric Plaag, in his role with the Watauga County Historical Society, volunteered to assist with the tour. The proposed event schedule would include speeches, an unveiling, and a tour.

Commission members discussed potential dates, selecting May 2nd (coinciding with Downtown Boone Development Association's First Friday) as the preferred option, with May 5th as a potential backup for Town Council Consideration. Suggested event timing was 4:00 or 5:00 p.m. to facilitate public attendance after work.

Commission members responded positively to including the tour and discussed possible tour structure and speech content. Chair Smyth offered to give opening remarks. Discussion included for brief remarks to include the Commission's purpose and a brief overview of the project. Vice-Chair Bond recommended inviting all previous HPC members involved in the project and reiterated the importance of having representation from the Junaluska community. Chair Smyth requested input on the speech content, suggesting it should reference the plaque details and acknowledge contributing individuals and groups. Members discussed possibilities of the tour and ensuring invitees are informed once the date and time are finalized after Town Council consideration.

Staff Updates

Statement of Conformity Report

Ms. Mitchell reported that one Statement of Conformity (SoC) application was submitted by Mellow Mushroom. Work to remove shutters has been completed, and the applicant will return for COA approval for additional work at that property. Ms. Mitchell reminded commission members of the upcoming Advisory meeting on May 6th and the Quasi-Judicial meeting on May 13th. She noted that three cases are scheduled

for the quasi-judicial meeting and advised members to plan for an extended meeting beyond 5:00 p.m. to allow for thorough review of those cases.

Other Staff Updates

Ms. Mitchell announced the receipt of an official review letter from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), confirming that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) met Certified Local Governments (CLG) responsibilities for the reporting year. She stated that the letter mentioned how the commission demonstrated engagement in preservation projects with interpretive panels, collaboration with the Main Street Program, and completion of training requirements. The letter will be included in the May Advisory packet. She provided that Chair Smyth had received the letter per CLG procedures.

Ms. Mitchell provided training updates:

- **April 30th:** Quasi-Judicial training from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m.; Commission members will be registered by Planning Staff. Commission members are welcome to attend at the Planning and Inspections Conference Room, or make arrangement to attend virtually.
- **May 21st:** Webinar on historic buildings and building codes at 2:00 p.m. She introduced this webinar to Commission members, and if they are interested, they should inform her to arrange registration. She added that as this deals with building code she has shared the webinar information with Planning & Inspections Staff, specially the building inspectors if they have feasibility to attend. She concluded that she would email the webinar details to Commission members.

She reminded members that three webinars per year satisfy CLG training requirements and that a worksheet must be completed following each training for annual CLG reporting purposes.

HPC Member Updates

Vice-Chair Bond inquired about the status of the Dana Folk Way / Ice House Alley plaque. Ms. Mitchell reported that Staff is awaiting a response from the property owner/manager. She referenced the February meeting discussion on the work plan, noting that as the Stoneman's Raid project was under review by the Civil War Trails (CWT) marker program. The text for the Ice House Alley plaque can be a project that the HPC considers, while the Stoneman's Raid panel remains under review. Vice-Chair Bond connected this discussion to the Howard Street project, which will be unveiled this month.

Vice-Chair Bond provided details of an upcoming event at the Watauga County Library in association with the Watauga County Historical Society on April 10, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.

Chair Smyth inquired about the collaboration with Dr. Deathridge's history class. Ms. Mitchell stated that she had reached out but had not received any questions or documents to update the Commission with at this time.

Other Discussion

There was no other discussion.

Adjournment

Commission Member Basinger made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Bond, to adjourn the meeting at 3:37 p.m.

Vote: Aye – 3
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Vardell Smyth, Chair

Alyson Wuagneux, Board Clerk