

**Boone Historic Preservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
May 8, 2018
3:00 p.m.**

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

Town Staff in Attendance: Jane Shook, Director of Planning and Inspections, Christy Turner, Senior Planner, Brittney Clark-Downtown Development Coordinator and Marlene Crosby-Board Secretary

Call to Order

Chairperson Plaag called the meeting of the Boone Historic Preservation Commission, held in the Planning & Inspections upstairs conference room located at 680 West King Street, to order at 3:05 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

Member Brantz made a motion, seconded by Member Clawson to accept the agenda as amended by moving the Discussion of Town Council Action on Building Heights, Setbacks, and Appearance Standards to number three and adding Digital Watauga Update to number eight on the agenda.

Vote:

Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

Member Brantz made a motion, seconded by Member Clawson to approve the March 20, 2018 Town Council, Historic Preservation Commission and Community Appearance Commission workshop minutes as written.

Vote:

Aye –
Nay – None

The motion passed.

Member Clawson made a motion, seconded by Member Brantz to approve the April 8, 2018 Union Soldier Re-dedication Ceremony minutes as written.

Vote:

Aye – (Bond, Brantz, Clawson, Dixon, Pearman, Plaag)

Nay – None

Abstain – (Watkins)

The motion passed.

Member Brantz made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chairperson Pearman to approve the April 10, 2018 regular meeting minutes as amended with the following four changes: On page two, remove the duplicate word Update from the first agenda item heading. On page two, paragraph two in the second sentence to read, “He sent a version of his ceremony remarks to the newspaper per a Council member’s request and the newspaper chose to publish a short version of his remarks. On page three, paragraph seven in the second sentence change the word “test” to “text”. On page six, paragraph five the first two sentences were changed to read, “Discussion of the authority to stop a historic building demolition. Chairperson Plaag said that he would need to check the state statutes but he believes that there is a 180-day limitation.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Discussion of Town Council Action on Building Heights, Setbacks and Appearance Standards

Chairperson Plaag explained that the Planning Commission members have discussed these three topics and have made recommendations on them and have presented them to Council.

Chairperson Plaag explained the reason that the Historic Preservation Commission is discussing these three topics. He urged the HPC members to read the March and April, 2018 Town Council Minutes to review Downtown building heights so the HPC members will have a sense of the building heights of Downtown buildings.

Ms. Jane Shook, Director of Planning and Inspections Department reviewed the building height analysis prepared by the Planning Staff that was included in the Council’s March 2018 meeting packet. It was noted that the Building Height Study was completed in the B-1 Central Business District. She talked about measuring building heights, when you have more than one street.

Ms. Shook explained that the building height information will be located in the Unified Development Ordinance Article 16. Ms. Shook noted that the Planning Staff started this work in January of 2018 prior to the Planning Retreat.

Ms. Shook said the Planning Staff modified the building height by location. It was noted that the dark blue on the map represents the higher buildings and the light blue on the map represents the shorter buildings. She noted for King Street the dark gray area on the map represents 30 feet which includes parapets. She said the building height in the rest of the B-1 zoning district

outside of this area was 33 feet not including parapets. She said that Council did not adopt this part of the text which is the 25 percent of the height. She said the rest of the text helps to regulate building height in the B-1.

Discussion ensued on exceptions to building heights.

Discussion ensued on the conditional zoning and the variance process to go higher in building height. Ms. Shook explained there are reasons to grant variances and it would be upon the applicant to provide that information.

Ms. Shook talked about the second modification to the text that has been adopted by Council. She said it was a clarification on how to meet secondary building heights. She said the entire building has to be set back and not just a portion of the building to meet primary and secondary building heights. She said a conditional district process would be necessary, if a building was torn down in the B-1 zoning district and you wanted it built back higher.

Ms. Shook talked about the joint-meeting that occurred with the Town Council, the Historic Preservation Commission and the Community Appearance Commission on March 20, 2018. She explained that at that meeting, it was suggested that the Planning Staff in the interim look at the Secretary of Interior Standards for Council to temporarily adopt these as a stop-gap measure for the appearance standards.

Ms. Shook explained that UDO, Article 18 will be used for the Downtown Appearance Standards. She noted that this Article has been set up so all other requirements can be moved into it.

Ms. Shook said that the Planning Staff based these modifications on the Secretary of Interior Standards or from regulatory language from other jurisdictions. She noted that the Planning Commission recommended approval of these modifications and Council adopted them.

Ms. Shook explained Council's concern for the requirements that a conditional district rezoning is required for a new building, being built higher.

Discussion ensued on the appearance and location of different parking decks. Chairperson Plaag talked about the location of a parking deck being an important factor. He said a good location for a parking deck would be on Howard Street which would help keep traffic off King Street.

Discussion of "This Place Matters" Event

Chairperson Plaag, Member Clawson, Member Bond and Member Watkins shared their experiences of being a tour guide for "This Place Matters" which was held on May 4, 2018 in Downtown Boone.

The HPC members suggested for the next "This Place Matters" event to have more visual aids possibly on easels and the business owners wearing name tags. The Historic Preservation Commission should also have name tags with HPC to appear on their nametags as well as to post photos of the historic building and to have photos and scripts on the Town website with a link to

the Digital Watauga website. It was suggested to have the next “This Place Matters” tours from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. rather than have them starting at 5 p.m.

It was noted that overall the tours were an opportunity to let the people know that these properties matter, there is an active Historic Preservation Commission and the Town is interested in showcasing their buildings.

Ms. Turner said the proposed Town of Boone Sustainability Forum event to be held on Friday, September 7, 2018 around 5 p.m. has been submitted to Council for their consideration at their May 2018 meeting.

Discussion ensued on including the HPC in the Sustainability Forum event. Ms. Turner said often times other cities include Historic Preservation with Sustainability. She asked the HPC if they wanted to participate in this event. Ms. Turner explained that there will be a presentation of an active Bee hive shown at this event. Ms. Turner said that the Tree City USA event will occur at this same time.

Chairperson Plaag suggested the HPC show an environmental protest film of Watauga County that is about 15 minutes long.

Chairperson Plaag talked about providing images of some students at the first birthday event. He said that he and Member Bond will work on this topic.

Chairperson Plaag suggested adding this topic to the next meeting agenda for further discussion.

At 4:16 p.m. Chairperson Plaag called for a short break. At 4:19 p.m. Chairperson Plaag reconvened the meeting.

At 4:16 p.m. Member Dixon left the meeting.

Boone Flood Marker Update

Chairperson Plaag said he thinks he has resolved the issue on the size of the vector file.

Chairperson Plaag said the Council approved the Boone Flood Marker event to install the flood marker on August 13, 2018 at 5 p.m.

Phase I Survey Report Update

Chairperson Plaag explained that he is still working on the survey entries and he should have it completed in the next ten-days to two weeks. He asked the HPC members to review the survey entries as quickly as possible. He suggested devoting the June, 2018 HPC meeting to discussing the completed survey entries. Ms. Turner noted that the information in the survey report helped the Town Staff, when they were working on the building height study.

Chairperson Plaag said there are 10 or 12 photographs of buildings that he needs to re-photograph because of the changes that have been made to them.

Chairperson Plaag noted that Dr. Gary Boye a person interested in Downtown entertainment has been looking at the Watauga Democrat throughout the 20th Century to capture every time that someone performed at the theatres and other places in the Town of Boone.

Discussion on Dates to go back to Boone Cemetery

Chairperson Plaag suggested going back to the Cemetery after the June 2018 HPC meeting.

It was the consensus of the HPC to set June 23, 2018, June 24, 2018 and July 1, 2018 with the last two dates being rain dates to work at the Cemetery.

Chairperson Plaag noted that he still needs to set the stakes at the Cemetery.

Chairperson Plaag said he was approached by a citizen about the possibility of human ashes being buried in the Boone Cemetery. He said that he directed this citizen to Mr. John Ward, Town Manager. Chairperson Plaag noted that this topic could be a future discussion item for the HPC.

Digital Watauga Update

Ms. Turner noted that Mr. Ward said he is sending an action request to be considered by Council at their May 2018 Council meeting for the \$5,000.00 that was recommended by the HPC for Digital Watauga. Mr. Ward said the request would be to move the funds from the HPC fund to Digital Watauga. It was noted that this transaction was requested for this budget year. Chairperson Plaag asked what period of time was this funding meant to cover. Ms. Turner said she would ask Mr. Ward about it.

Chairperson Plaag noted that in full disclosure that Ms. Brittney Clark, Downtown Development Coordinator had emailed him on behalf of Digital Watauga to see if he was interested in a similar agreement with the Downtown Boone Development Association. He talked about the splitting up of the funds to include the DBDA.

Chairperson Plaag and Member Bond talked about asking for guidance on the requesting of future funds from Council.

Chairperson Plaag talked about not having an intern for three of the four semesters at Digital Watauga. He said in this job economy he cannot draw people to work for free. He said because he is not in a position to hire people, he has an intern to work through the summer through a partnership with the Watauga County Library.

Discussion on the Historic Design Guidelines and Handbook

Chairperson Plaag began discussion on the June 2014 draft Guidelines for Commercial Historic Landmarks and Commercial Properties within Historic Districts located on page 65 through 69 of the draft guidelines, Sections Number 1 through 1.4.

The HPC began discussion on Number 1: Storefronts, Upper Façade, Side Elevations and Rear Elevations.

Page 65, 1.0:

- Extend period from 1910 to 1960
- Add to sentence two, the transition to this architecture in Boone began in 1920
- Add clear story windows
- Add to sentence three, or fabric awnings on hinges

Page 66, 1.0:

- Add to paragraph one, sentence one, including clear storefront windows, remove transom windows

Page 67, 1.1:

- Add to paragraph two, sentence one, clear story windows before transom bars

Ms. Fotta left the meeting at 4:55 p.m.

Discussion ensued on the glass that is on the Farmers Hardware building. It was noted that this glass is a later addition.

While discussing the Appalachian Theatre it was noted that the manufacturers of structural glass have gone out of business. Chairperson Plaag explained that he checked on another vendor for glass and he was told that he could supply a lime green, white and about one-third of the black and he could not get any more black glass for five to seven years.

Chairperson Plaag talked about using spandrel glass rather than structural glass for the substitute material. He explained that spandrel glass is what was used on buildings like the 1938 Appalachian Theatre, when the original materials were no longer available. It was noted that spandrel glass makes for a safer façade because of its material.

Chairperson Plaag noted that the HPC needs to discuss the language to address the issues of reconstruction. He said he thinks that there needs to be a choice to do new construction or new construction that is appropriate.

Chairperson Plaag noted that SHPO is not exactly happy with the look of the reconstruction of the old PNC Bank because it is not an exact reconstruction.

For the next HPC meeting on June 12, 2018, Chairperson Plaag asked the HPC to have read all of their survey entries and be ready for a discussion on them. He said that he would like to continue to review the draft design guidelines at the HPC meeting in July of 2018.

Other Matters by Commission Members or Staff

Set agenda for next meeting:

- Discussion of the Sustainability Forum Event

- Boone Flood Marker Update
- Discussion of the Phase I Survey Report Entries

Adjournment

Member Clawson made a motion, seconded by Member Brantz to adjourn the meeting at 5:05 p.m.

Vote:

Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.

Eric Plaag, Chairperson

Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary