



Historic Preservation Commission

Regular Meeting

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

~ Agenda ~

Jane Shook
828-268-6960

Tuesday, June 8, 2021

3:00 PM

WebEx

This meeting will be held remotely using WebEx, a video conferencing software. For information on how to watch listen, and/or participate in the meeting, please see the WebEx Video Conferencing information at the end of this agenda.

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Adoption of Agenda**
- III. Approval of Minutes**
 - April 13, 2021 Meeting Minutes
 - May 11, 2021 Meeting Minutes
- IV. Public Comment**
- V. Junaluska Local Historical Marker Dedication Event**
- VI. Inventory of Town of Boone Cemeteries**
- VII. Cemetery Guidelines**
- VIII. Hardin House**
- IX. Downtown Projects Update**
- X. Certificate of Appropriateness**
- XI. Quasi-Judicial Training**
- XII. Town Streets Project**
- XIII. Boone 150 Committee**
- XIV. Adjournment**

To watch the meeting: Anyone can view the meeting live at: <https://townofboone.net.viebit.com/index.php>

Note: To preserve bandwidth and ensure an orderly meeting, individuals who wish to view the meeting but not speak at it should view the livestream at this link. Only individuals who wish to participate should use the WebEx link described below:

To participate in the meeting: Individuals who wish to participate may do so through WebEx, a video conferencing software, either online (by computer or smartphone) or by telephone. To do so, please email Jane Shook, Director of Planning & Inspections at jane.shook@townofboone.net or call in at 828-268-6960 and you will be provided with an email invitation to the meeting. All requests for participation must be completed by 5:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting. 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.

**TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 13, 2021
3:00 PM**

Historic Preservation Commission Members in Attendance:

Chairperson Eric Plaag, Vice-Chairperson Phoebe Pollitt, Bettie Bond and Chuck Watkins

Council Liaisons: Rennie Brantz and Virginia Roseman

Town Staff in Attendance:

Jane Shook-Director of Planning and Inspections, Christy Turner-Senior Planner and Marlene Crosby-Board Secretary

Others Present: John Ward-Town Manager and Lane Moody-Downtown Boone Development Coordinator

Call to Order

Chairperson Eric Plaag called the meeting of the Boone Historic Preservation Commission, held via WebEx, a video conferencing software to order on Tuesday April 13, 2021 at 3 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

Vice- Chairperson Pollitt made a motion, seconded by Member Bond to adopt the agenda as written.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Chairperson Plaag polled the members as follows: Vice-Chairperson Pollitt, Member Bond and Member Watkins and Chairperson Plaag.

Discussion of Scheduled and Potential Special Meetings

Ms. Jane Shook, Director of Planning & Inspections noted that the next joint meeting will be on Tuesday, April 20, 2021 at 6 p.m. She said the Community Appearance Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, Planning Commission and the Town Council will make up this joint meeting.

Chairperson Plaag asked Ms. Shook to go through the process of the Downtown Planning Projects. He asked her if there would be additional special meetings beyond the April 20, 2021 joint meeting. Ms. Shook said yes there would be.

Chairperson Plaag asked the HPC for their feedback regarding having another possible joint meeting. Vice-Chairperson Pollitt said she did not want to commit to an additional joint meeting unless it was necessary due to her current work schedule.

Discussion ensued on tabling some of the agenda items for this meeting. Chairperson Plaag asked for a consensus regarding covering agenda items one through twelve. He asked Ms. Shook if the Town Website agenda item could wait until another meeting. Ms. Shook said the agenda item 16, Town Website topic can be discussed, when the Downtown Planning Projects update occurs.

Approval of Minutes

Member Bond made a motion, seconded by Member Watkins to approve the February 9, 2021 meeting minutes as amended.

Vote:

Aye – (Bond, Plaag, Watkins)

Nay – None

Abstained – (Pollitt)

The motion passed.

Chairperson Plaag polled the HPC members as follows: Bond, Watkins, Plaag and Pollitt-Abstained

Member Bond made a motion, seconded by Member Watkins to approve the March 9, 2021 meeting minutes as amended.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Chairperson Plaag polled the HPC members as follows: Bond, Pollitt, Watkins and Plaag

Public Comment

Ms. Pam Williamson stated that she is concerned for historical landmarks inside and outside of the Town of Boone. She informed the HPC of some information that she had acquired about the Hardin House that she had found mostly through public records requests and email exchanges between herself and county officials. She noted that she was not asking for any action from the HPC at this meeting.

Ms. Williamson said in the beginning of 2018, Mr. Joe Furman the Watauga County Planning and Inspections Director questioned whether the Hardin House could be considered historical. She said at that time Mr. Deron Geouque, the Watauga County Manager said that he had spoken to Mr. John Ward the Boone Town Manager regarding a joint venture for a parking lot, so the Hardin House would not have to be demolished. She said in July of 2018, the County Commissioners voted in open session to purchase the Hardin House. She said at that time there was not any mention of a parking lot or the historic nature of the property nor to burn down the building. In early 2019, the County Manager told the Board of Commissioners in closed session that the Town of Boone was interested in a swap for parking at the Queen Street parking lot. She said Watauga County proceeded with getting quotes on the cost to demolish the building with no notice to the public or did they have a public vote as required by law to demolish it. She said in early 2019 Chairperson Plaag encouraged Watauga County to work with the Town of Boone to save the building. She said in a subsequent closed meeting, Commissioner Kennedy reported on what he called a productive meeting with the Town of Boone. In August of 2019, in another closed session, it was decided that the Hardin House would be demolished at the end of Mr. Turner's lease. She said this was not reported to the public, no vote was taken to do so and the meeting was not properly noticed. She said in a closed meeting on November 19, the county commissioners decided by consensus in a closed session to seek a demolition permit. She said that they did not properly notice this discussion for that meeting as required by law and they did not have a consensus behind closed doors.

Ms. Williamson said on December 19, people started asking her questions about the Hardin House. She wrote the County Manager and the Board of Commissioners and asked if they intended to tear down or demolish the Hardin House in order to build a parking lot. She noted that she was not aware of a public notice for this public meeting. She said that she had heard that Watauga County was under the impression that tearing down the Hardin House for a parking lot was acceptable because the home was not technically designated as a store. She said she updated one of the county commissioners on the possible historic significance of the Hardin House and he told the other county commissioners this information. She talked more about other meetings that had not been publicly noticed where discussion occurred regarding the demolishing of the Hardin House. She said that one of the county commissioners told her that there had not been a public meeting but he had been instructed to place the Hardin House topic on the county commissioners December 17 meeting agenda. She said that County Commissioner Kennedy said that the county commissioners cannot vote in closed session but they can reach a consensus on a topic. She talked about the advertising for the selling of the Hardin House. She said a demolition

permit was obtained for it and at that point there was not a public vote to demolish it, only a public vote to surplus the building. She said in early 2020 discussions with the Town of Boone began to save the house. She said that Chairperson Plaag presented evidence of historical significance. She said the County Manager stated that the County had reserved \$100,000.00 for the demolition costs. She said on July 21, 2020 in closed session the county manager reported that a man named Mr. Mark Scruggs had expressed an interest in purchasing the Hardin House and moving it to a lot located behind the Watauga County Courthouse. She said one of the County Commissioners Turnbow agreed with the selling of the house and also agree to sell it for \$1.00 and the county pay as much as \$100,000.00 to move the house for Mr. Scruggs. She said about a month later in a closed session meeting, the county manager reported that he had spoken to Mr. Scruggs about a month later, the county manager said that he had not heard back from Mr. Scruggs. She said that Chairperson Plaag had spoken with Mr. Scruggs and he told Chairperson Plaag that Mr. Scruggs offered to purchase the house for \$300.00 and it would cost \$75,000.00 to move it and the county manager had turned down his offer to purchase. She said to the best of her knowledge this information was not communicated to the general public by the county commissioners.

She said in another closed meeting on October 20, of 2020 the county manager talked about the demolition of the Hardin House and to forego discussions with the town. She said a month later in an unnoticed closed meeting, the commissioners voted by consensus to demolish the house. She said in December of 2020 the county commissioners under pressure from numerous public records requests voted publicly to demolish the Hardin House. She said this is the first notice that the public had regarding the demolishing of the Hardin House. She further talked about the unnoticed closed session meetings. She concluded that she wanted to let the HPC know about the information that she presented at this meeting and that in the future she would be going public with said information.

Chairperson Plaag asked Ms. Shook, if it would be appropriate if he opened the floor for questions to be asked of Ms. Williamson by the HPC. Ms. Shook deferred that question to Mr. John Ward, Town Manager noting that Council sometimes allows questions during public comment. Mr. Ward said that following the Council's manner of allowing questions during public comment, it would be appropriate if the Chairperson agrees.

Vice-Chairperson Pollitt expressed her appreciation to Ms. Williamson for the information that she presented. She pointed out that Chairperson Plaag had kept the HPC up to date on the same information. She said she thought the town and county were still in parking negotiations. She explained that she has been surprised and dismayed when she heard the information regarding the Hardin House.

Member Watkins thanked Ms. Williamson for presenting her information to the HPC.

Chairperson Plaag closed public comment.

Hardin House/Turner House

Chairperson Plaag pointed out that this house has been called all of the following names: Hardin House, Turner House and Judge Ginn House. He pointed out that he included in the meeting packet the Watauga County unsealed closed session meeting minutes dating back to 2018. He noted that he had obtained these meeting minutes through the public record request process.

Chairperson Plaag referred to an email that he had sent to the HPC on March 22, 2021. He said in this email, he would like to draw attention to Mr. Deron Geouque's characterization of remarks that Chairperson Plaag made at the joint meeting of the town and county officials on July 23, 2019. Chairperson Plaag said that characterization of what he had said at that meeting about the historical status and eligibility of the house was completely false. He said he was disappointed and disturbed at how his comments were taken out of context and in opposition to what he had communicated at that joint meeting. He said at no time had he possessed or received "an email stating that the Hardin House will not be on the historical register". He said that he stated at that meeting that

there had been a previous attempt by Judge Ginn to have the building study listed, which is the first step in the National Register process. He noted that this attempt in the early 2000's was not successful because of the aluminum siding and the alternation of the porch and the port cochere. He said that these issues were reversible and the property would likely be eligible, if the rehabilitation work were completed. He said this is exactly what he told the county commissioners at the May 7, 2019 County Commissioners meeting. He said that a copy of that revised write up is included in this meeting packet.

Chairperson Plaag noted that he agreed with Ms. Williamson's assessment of what has taken place over the last four years regarding the Hardin House including the way that the county commissioners have flouted North Carolina law regarding appropriate notice to public meetings, rules of procedure for voting that comes before the county commissioners in closed session. He said that he believed that the county commissioners intentionally attempted to hide what was being done and discussed in their meetings.

Chairperson Plaag said that the HPC learned from the Watauga Democrat in January of 2019 about the Hardin House being demolished for a parking deck and this information was not included in their meeting minutes. He noted that official meeting minutes were not being taken during these meetings.

Chairperson Plaag did confirm that he spoke with Mr. Scruggs by phone on March 30, 2020 and that Mr. Scruggs had made the \$300.00 offer to purchase the Hardin House. He talked about business transactions needing to be documented in an official set of meeting minutes, especially when property is being surplus. He talked about the rest of the conversation that he had with Mr. Scruggs including an email that was sent to the county manager on April 2, 2021 and also sent by certified mail (permanently on file). He read aloud the said email. He said that he did include a note stating that he had blind copied this email to the Mayor Rennie Brantz and the HPC members.

Chairperson Plaag noted that he wants the information in the meeting packet to be an eternal public record and for there to be transparency about what transpired with the demolition of the Hardin House property and the ways that the county manager and county commissioners approached this process.

Discussion ensued on things that could have helped prevent the demolition of the Hardin House. Member Watkins noted that maybe the Town Attorney could have been involved once the Town found out about the possible house demolition. Chairperson Plaag said there were things that the HPC could have possibly done but the HPC did not know about it in time. He said the HPC could have prioritized the Hardin House for possibly landmark designation for the Council's consideration. He said that even if that had occurred there is nothing that prohibits a landmark property owner from demolishing their property. He said there is a one-year waiting period. Member Watkins noted that the demolition permit could have been temporarily revoked.

Chairperson Plaag asked Mr. Ward to speak on things that the Town could have realistically done. Mr. Ward stated that the Council meetings are scheduled at the same time that the County Commissioners meetings.

Mr. Ward talked about making the Town Council aware of the January 2021 county commissioners meeting and that the county commissioners were discussing Mr. Ward's request about the county working with the town on the Queen Street parking deck. Mr. Ward said that he felt there was a great deal of misinformation that was shared that led the county commissioners to vote not to participate in the Queen Street parking deck. He talked about the preservation of the house resting on the diverting of their wishes to demolish the house for a parking lot in order to gain more Downtown parking between the library, and at the end of the administration building.

Chairperson Ward talked about a quote that he read in the Watauga Democrat where the county had offered the Town \$1.00 for the Hardin House. He said the county had offered to sell the house to the Town for the amount that it was brought for which was in excess of \$750,000.00. Mr. Ward said his attempts to get clarification on said statement were unsuccessful. He said at that time he was not aware of anyone who knew anything about the

offer to give the house to the Town other than the commission member who made that quote in the Watauga Democrat.

Mr. Ward talked about the geotechnical borings information and noted that this information was provided to the Town Council and the County Commissioners. He explained why the geotechnical work had not been done which was because the footprint of the parking deck had not been decided upon. He said that he followed up with a letter from the engineer, which was hired by the town and the county providing same explanation and requesting direction or which of the two options presented by the engineering firm. He said the options were presented to both the Town Council and the County Commissioners to see if the county would like to proceed, so we would know where to do the geotechnical borings. He said he has an email receipt that shows that the email was opened and read. He said that he does not know what happened to the information requested after that. He noted that he was not sure if it would have made a difference if he had attended the county commissioners meetings or not to try to present information to change their vote to demolish the house. He explained the county's process to submit information to be considered at their meetings and that he had submitted his information to them prior to their meetings. He said there is no way to interact with the county commissioners during their meetings. He explained that when the Town was moving through the engineering process for the Queen Street deck, there was a group of meetings or decisions taking place that the Town was unaware of at that time because they were done in closed session. He said the Town was moving forward with what the town thought was a joint project with the Town and County. He said there was a joint engineer that was being paid fifty percent by the Town and fifty by the County.

Chairperson Plaag asked Mr. Ward to confirm that he has never received from the county manager or from the county commissioners as a body an offer to move the Hardin House to Town property for \$1.00 and that they would pay the cost of moving it. Mr. Ward said he searched his records and he did not find that information. He said that he did find a \$750,000 offer. Mr. Ward said that the Town meeting minutes have not been unsealed but he said that offer was taken to the Town Council.

Discussion ensued on the demolition permit for the Hardin House. Ms. Shook pointed out that there has to be a reason to put a stop work order on a project or to revoke a permit that has been legally obtained. Mr. Ward noted that a demolition permit was applied for and it was issued with a deadline pending. He talked about the county moving forward without doing different options because they were worried about the Town not renewing the demolition permit. He said the town extended the deadline, in order to buy time to reassure them, the Town was not going to pull the permit, while still acting in good faith and keeping a focus on the Queen Street parking deck. Ms. Shook read the language from the Unified Development Ordinance regarding the revoking of building and zoning permits.

Downtown Projects Update

Ms. Shook explained that the Planning Staff is working on issues with the story maps, drafting language on rooftop additions, creating frequently asked questions for the Historic District and for the B-1 Expansion Project, completing a Town website narrative for the Downtown Projects. She said there will be a webpage for the B-1 Expansion and the Downtown Local Historic District. She said Planning Staff is working with the Fire Department to take drone photos of the Downtown area to include in the mailer, will present a draft public input plan and revisions to the design guidelines. She said this information will be in the Special Joint meeting packet for the meeting scheduled for Tuesday, April 20, 2021 at 6 p.m. She said that Ms. Christy Turner, Senior Planner and Mr. Brian Johnson, Urban Design Specialist would be working with her on presenting this information at that joint meeting.

Ms. Shook discussed allowing the chairs and vice chairs from the Community Appearance Commission, Historic Preservation Commission and the Planning Commission to attend other meetings, if they'd like to further discuss items in order to prepare for public input meetings.

Downtown Boone Local Historic District Designation Report

Chairperson Plaag talked about the state response letter asking for certain changes and an email from him responding to the state comments being in the meeting packet. He said that he had revised the District Designation Report to make the appropriate changes to their comments. He said it is important to discuss and vote on accepting the revised version of said report so the Council can consider the HPC's official recommendation of it.

Motion and Vote:

Member Watkins made a motion, seconded by Member Bond to present the revised District Designation Report to Council for their review and approval pending any Town Attorney review and any additional possible changes.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Chairperson Plaag polled the members as follows: Member Watkins, Member Bond, Vice-Chairperson Pollitt and Chairperson Plaag

Downtown Boone Design Standards, Including Rooftop Additions

Ms. Shook said that the Planning Staff and the Town Attorney had discussed presenting for public input the Design Standards that have already been created rather than to use the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation as a default design standard until more detailed design standards document is approved. She said there would be some revisions needed for the design standards such as some language to make it clear that you are reserving the right during the public hearings to consult with the National Park Service and the State Historic Preservation Office or experts on items that are not directly addressed by the standards. She talked about the other changes that are needed as a result of 160-D, reviewing changes for Article Eight for the quasi-judicial process and the standards for the B-1 Expansion.

Chairperson Plaag talked about the quasi-judicial training for the HPC members. Ms. Shook said the Planning Staff is looking at how other jurisdictions are doing this type of training for their board members.

Ms. Shook talked about the need for guidelines for rooftop additions. She said that Chairperson Plaag provided the Planning Staff with information for rooftops additions from the National Park Service. Chairperson Plaag referred to page 390 of the meeting packet and to Section 7.6 Rooftop Additions. He pointed out a link that is available from the National Park Service that gives NPC guidance. Ms. Shook said she wanted to hear from the HPC on this topic before the Planning Staff worked more on the proposed rooftop text.

Member Watkins asked if an engineering study is required for rooftops. Ms. Shook said that would be a building code question.

Chairperson Plaag said a motion and vote is needed to revise the existing draft design standards and to incorporate the two areas that were addressed in the previous design standards on rooftop additions.

Motion and Vote:

Member Bond made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chairperson Pollitt for the Planning Staff to revise the existing draft design standards and to incorporate the two areas that were addressed in the previous design standards on rooftop additions.

Vote:

Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.

Chairperson Plaag polled the HPC members as follows: Member Watkins, Member Bond, Vice-Chairperson Pollitt and Chairperson Plaag.

COA Application

Chairperson Plaag said that for any landmarks that currently exist, when a property owner wants to make changes to their property, they have to go through the Certificate of Appropriateness process for major works. He said that he had discussed with Ms. Shook about the previous language for a COA being needed for minor works which is handled by Staff. He said that the HPC decided to use the term “Statement of conformity” which meets the design standards. He said that Staff is handling the minor work, and they will issue a “Statement of Conformity” which conforms to the design standards for the district. He said the COA process is specifically for this process.

Chairperson Plaag further discussed the minor and major works. He said there will be a separate application for probably minor works and major works based on what information is filled out on an application. Ms. Turner noted that the Planning Staff has been working on the Town of Boone COA application and she would get the COA application to the HPC for their review at their next meeting

Junaluska Local Historical Marker Dedication – Road Closure and Invitation

Chairperson Plaag said that he and Mr. Ward had discussed in detail the road closure. Chairperson Plaag said that they talked about closing the lower end of North Depot Street between Queen Street away from the funeral home. He said the event space would be closed all the way up to North Street. He said the people attending the event would be in the area at the bottom of North Depot Street just above Queen Street.

Mr. Ward talked about a discussion that ties back to Ms. Lane Moody, and the Downtown Boone Development Association based on the location of that historical marker, there is an agenda item moving forward to transfer \$200,000.00 from the municipal service district into our streetscape line item. He said one of the projects that they will be focusing on in the upcoming year, if approved by Town Council, will actually be upgraded lighting, sidewalks and the street between King Street and the Watauga County Library. He said they felt like this is an appropriate use of the municipal service district streetscape funds and make a safer walking path to and from downtown into the Library District as well, which is in the municipal service district.

Chairperson Plaag confirmed that the event will begin at 5 p.m. and the road closure will be from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Discussion ensued on the speakers for the event. Chairperson Plaag suggested that the HPC offer the Junaluska Heritage Association to send someone to speak about what the marker means to their community. There was consensus from the HPC to ask the JHA to attend the ceremony.

Ms. Shook noted that she thought it was appropriate for the HPC to speak at the ceremony. Chairperson Plaag said he would be available to speak at the ceremony. Vice-Chairperson Pollitt suggested asking the Junaluska Choir to sing at the ceremony. Mr. Ward agreed that it is appropriate for the choir be invited to sing at the ceremony.

Discussion ensued on the number of people that can be invited to the event. Mr. Ward said at this time the Town is limited to 50 people but that is subject to change by the time the event occurs. Chairperson Plaag asked Mr. Ward to provide a list of Town Officials to include along with the HPC members to be invited to the ceremony along with 30 slots left for the members of the JHA. He suggested letting the JHA decide who will fill the 30 slots as opposed to the Town trying to decide. Ms. Turner said that she would ask the JHA.

Mr. Ward said that we will not be able to have refreshments at the event due to Covid-19 protocols. He said there will be Police Officers to help with traffic flow and have the Public Works employees to take care of the barricades. He said he would ask the Planning Staff to coordinate with Town Hall and Ms. Moody who works with the DBDA pm the event. Chairperson Plaag asked that the Cultural Resources staff to video the ceremony.

Informal Discussion

Chairperson Plaag suggested tabling agenda items thirteen through eighteen to the May 2021 HPC meeting.

Motion and Vote:

Chairperson Plaag made a motion, seconded by Member Watkins to table agenda items thirteen through eighteen to the May HPC meeting.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Chairperson Plaag polled the following HPC members: Member Bond, Member Watkins, Vice-Chairperson Pollitt and Chairperson Plaag.

Adjournment

Member Bond made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chairperson Pollitt to adjourn the meeting at 5:04 p.m.

Vote:

Aye - All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Chairperson Plaag polled the following HPC members: Member Bond, Member Watkins, Vice-Chairperson Pollitt and Chairperson Plaag.

TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 11, 2021
3:00 PM

Historic Preservation Commission Members in Attendance:

Chairperson Eric Plaag, Vice-Chairperson Phoebe Pollitt, Bettie Bond and Chuck Watkins

Council Liaisons: Rennie Brantz and Virginia Roseman

Town Staff in Attendance:

Jane Shook-Director of Planning and Inspections, Christy Turner-Senior Planner and Marlene Crosby-Board Secretary

Others Present: John Ward-Town Manager and Laney Pilkington-Administrative Support

Specialist/Communications, Mark Freed-Director of Cultural Resources, and Brian Williams, Applicant

Call to Order

Chairperson Eric Plaag called the meeting of the Boone Historic Preservation Commission, held via WebEx, a video conferencing software to order on Tuesday May 11, 2021 at 3:04 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

Member Bond made a motion, seconded by Vice- Chairperson Pollitt to adopt the agenda as written.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Chairperson Plaag polled the members as follows: Member Bond, Member Watkins, Vice-Chairperson Pollitt, and Chairperson Plaag.

Public Comment

No individuals requested the opportunity to speak during public comment.

Blue Ridge Tourist Court and Motel/Local Landmark Designation Report

Chairperson Plaag explained that in full disclosure, he would need to recuse himself from the discussion on this agenda item because he was hired by the property owner, Mr. Brian Williams to be the historical consultant for the Local Landmark Designation Report. Chairperson Plaag recommended approval from the Historic Preservation Commission to recuse himself from any input, discussion or voting on said project. Chairperson Plaag noted that he would be available to answer any historical questions on said project.

Motion and Vote:

Vice-Chairperson Pollitt made a motion seconded by Member Bond to approve Chairperson Plaag to recuse himself from the discussion on the Blue Ridge Tourist Motor Court and Motel agenda topic because Chairperson Plaag was hired as the historical consultant by the property owner, Mr. Brian Williams to work on the Local Landmark Designation Report.

Vote:

Aye – (Bond, Pollitt and Watkins)

Nay- None

Abstain - Plaag

The motion passed.

Chairperson Plaag polled the members as follows: Member Bond, Member Watkins and Vice-Chairperson Pollitt.

Chairperson Plaag turned the meeting over to Vice-Chairperson Pollitt and she asked Mr. Brian Williams, property owner of the Blue Ridge Tourist Motor Court and Motel to give his presentation of the said property beginning on page two of the meeting packet.

Mr. Williams began discussion on his proposed project and noted that he had hired Dr. Eric Plaag, from Carolina Historical Consulting, LLC to be the historical consultant on this proposed project. Mr. Williams gave a brief overview of the Blue Ridge Tourist Court and Motel, Local Landmark Designation Report prepared by Dr. Plaag (permanently on file).

Mr. Williams presented a seven-page PowerPoint (permanently on file) that explained the building names and general site layout of the buildings and their locations on the site. He explained the dates of construction of the buildings and the historical significance from 1950 to 1970. He noted the previous owners of the property with one owner in particular being Mr. Estel G. Wagner who was a local builder-developer and he built the tourist court & motel and other motels in the Town of Boone.

Mr. Williams gave a virtual tour of the buildings on the property and pointed out that the property has been used as an apartment complex since the mid to early 1990's and has since fallen into a state of disrepair.

Mr. Williams gave a brief architectural summary of the properties that included photos from the Watauga Digital Project. He talked about the office which was built of stone with a flat roof and constructed in 1950. He said the office building had an unusually large roof overhang on all four sides, and the outside was made of natural granite in random ashlar pattern. On the inside it had a large fireplace located on the west side that had a polished granite mantel.

Mr. Williams explained that the tourist court motel rooms were arranged in a L-shape built in 1950 and on the north and west elevations they used concrete block coated with Shotcrete in a brick masonry pattern, a concrete slab walkway was covered by half-gabled roof, the north end features had a stepped parapet wall, a concrete stairwell on the west leading to a boiler in the basement, a boiler stack was visible in photos no longer present, the original steel case windows remain and an above ground pool was added in the 1970's it was removed and that area is now landscaped.

Mr. Williams described the annex building. He said it was built in 1951 to accommodate longer stays. It has two units with two rooms each the main elevation features Shotcrete with brick pattern, and the originally featured steel case windows that have been replaced.

Mr. Williams described the garage apartment. He said it was built in the late 1951 to 1952 to provide long-term stay options and on the main and west elevation there is a Shotcrete brick masonry pattern.

Mr. Williams described the second motel parcel. He said it was acquired in July of 1951 and erected the present motel building sometime before 1955, most likely late in 1953 or early 1954, it has ten rooms, it currently has modern plywood siding. and original lap siding underneath the plywood. He said it also had a parapet wall and terra-cotta tiles.

Mr. Williams opened the floor for questions on the presentation. Member Bond asked Mr. Williams about his plans for the said properties and how long would it take to achieve the renovation. He said the properties are currently zoned B-2 which is neighborhood business. Mr. Williams said his intent is to operate the main tourist court building, office and the annex as an Air B & B style motel. He said the garage apartment behind the motel

is also zoned B-2 and he wants to keep it and make it a long-term rental. He pointed out that his intent for it is to request re-zoning to R-3 and create condos or town homes and sell condos or town homes on the parcel behind the motel that was originally the second phase of the motel.

Mr. Williams explained that he is pursuing a local landmark designation and a National Register of Historic Places for the properties. He explained that he has already submitted his conditional district zoning application to be reviewed by the Planning Commission and Town Council later this month. He said it would be considered by Council at their June meeting for final consideration of the conditional district rezoning.

Member Bond asked Mr. Williams if there were any major obstacles in his way of moving forward with his plans for his property. Mr. Williams said he had a couple of odd lot issues around the motel. He said when the subdivision was created in the 1920's a street ran down the eastern side of the parcel on South Street which was used for a driveway for the motel and it was never officially transferred into the hands of the Town. He said it has been referred to what he believes is a paper street. He said he has spoken with the Town of Boone Public Works Department and the Town Attorney regarding said street. He said the Town Attorney suggested contacting the property owner adjacent to the motel which is a condo association. He said he has been struggling to find that contact information. Mr. Williams said he has received the contact information for a previous president who might be able to put him in touch with the incoming president. He further explained that he is dealing with a lot line issue which is about seven feet over into the driveway of the motel and he is working with the property owner to try and secure an easement for that seven feet in order to meet current standards for parking and driveways.

Member Watkins asked Dr. Plaag except for the tourist court building in Blowing Rock, is the Blue Ridge Tourist Court and Motel the oldest surviving post World War II tourist court tele-type building in the Town of Boone. Dr. Plaag said yes, that is located in the Town limits.

Member Bond asked how did these developers finance projects like this? She asked if the financial institutions were willing to loan. Dr. Plaag said that he did not look into financial institutions specifically, when writing his report but in the case of Mr. Estel Wagner, he laid the concrete block himself.

Mr. Williams said that meeting the landscaping requirements will be another obstacle that he will have to work out. He said that he has been able to accommodate the current landscaping requirements for the motel parcel because he has more space and flexibility to work with in that area. He said on the upper portion of property, he will have some limited space that he will have to work out.

Motion and Vote:

Member Bond made a motion, seconded by Member Watkins to recommend that both parcels at the Blue Ridge Tourist Court and Motel be designated as a single local landmark.

Vote:

Aye – (Bond, Pollitt, Watkins)

Nay – None

Abstain – Plaag

The motion passed.

Vice-Chairperson Pollitt polled the HPC members as follows: Member Bond, Member Watkins and Vice-Chairperson Pollitt

Chairperson Plaag rejoined the meeting and his position as the HPC Chairperson.

Mr. Williams left the virtual meeting at approximately 3:39 p.m.

Junaluska Local Historical Marker Dedication – Road Closure & Invitations

Chairperson Plaag pointed out that the HPC in a previous meeting had dealt with the road closure for the marker dedication event. He asked Mr. John Ward, Town Manager if the Council had any concerns with the road closure for said event. Mr. Ward said there were no concerns voiced by Council.

Discussion ensued on the invitation process for the Junaluska Local Historical Marker Dedication. Mr. Ward introduced Ms. Laney Pilkington the Town Hall Administrative Assistant and Communications person. Mr. Ward explained that Ms. Pilkington will be assisting the Planning Staff with the invitation process. Mr. Ward said that he had checked the CDC guidance and he stated that he thought it would be safe enough to have up to 200 people attend the said outdoor event, since it would be held later on in the month of June.

Ms. Christy Turner, Senior Planner noted that she had received the names and addresses from the Junaluska Heritage Association to add to the invitation list. Mr. Ward confirmed that we would be using an invitation process rather than a public invitation process for said event. Ms. Turner said yes.

Chairperson Plaag asked about adding more people from the public, if it looks like the prepared area for the event would hold more people. Mr. Ward said that he and the Planning Staff could invite at that time more of the public if it looks like there is room for them. Mr. Ward also suggested that we add some people from the Appalachian State University, Diversity office to the public invitation list. Chairperson Plaag agreed with Mr. Ward.

Vice-Chairperson Pollitt suggested asking the Junaluska Choir to sing at the said event. Mr. Turner reported that she had spoken to Mr. Clay the Junaluska Choir Director and he is going to check with the choir and get back to Ms. Turner. Member Bond said she would like for the choir to pick a song for everyone to sing together maybe at the end of the program. Ms. Turner said she would check on it.

Chairperson Plaag asked Mr. Mark Freed, Director of Cultural Resources if it is possible to live stream the event. Mr. Freed said he may not be able to live stream, but he felt that the event could be recorded and uploaded to a You Tube Channel on the same day of event. Mr. Freed said he has some tents that he could put up for people that might need to sit during the event, and he has a podium and a speaker available if needed.

Town Cemeteries Standards and Inventory of Town of Boone Cemeteries

Chairperson Plaag combined these two agenda items because they were combined for discussion at the Council meeting. He said the HPC had approved him to present to Council a memo for direction for HPC on what the Council wanted the HPC to work on with regard to Town Cemeteries located within Town limits. He said the Council clarified that what they were looking for in terms of cemetery standards were some type of screening guidelines for Council to use when considering whether to take over an existing private cemetery. He said the first thing the Council asked the HPC to create is a set of historically minded guidelines that would help them decide whether it is in the best interest of the Town to take responsibility for a cemetery for its long-term preservation. He said the guidelines would also need to include a type of interpretive action that the Council might instruct the HPC to take for example when exploring a local landmark status. He said the second thing the Council did was authorize the Town Attorney to confer with the HPC on other strategies in determining how to secure permission for the installation of an historical marker at the Hayes, Bryan, Greene cemetery and to set aside \$2,500.00 for the cost of that marker. He said the third thing the Council asked the HPC was if they can secure that permission through whatever strategies the HPC and the Town Attorney create, then the HPC would work on a marker application for that location to interpret that cemetery. The fourth thing the Council asked the HPC to do is to complete an inventory of cemeteries either wholly or partially within the Town of Boone limits and be completed preferably by December 31, 2021. He suggested including in the inventory every above ground stone that is eligible. Chairperson Plaag confirmed that the cemetery inventory needs to be completed by the end of December 2021. He said that he thinks it was expected that the HPC would figure out the issues specifically with the Hayes, Bryan, Greene cemetery in time to have the erection of the historical marker by the Boone 150 event,

since it involves the first mayor of Boone's grave site. Vice-Chairperson Pollitt pointed out that this area does not have a lot of visibility for such an expensive marker at said location. She suggested maybe putting up an educational panel at that cemetery. Chairperson Plaag said that an educational panel also costs about \$2,500.00. He agreed with Vice-Chairperson Pollitt about the placement of the marker at the Hayes, Bryan and Greene cemetery. He said would it be better located at Straight Street and King Street or on the corner of Gladys Street. He said he thought the neighborhood might prefer a marker be placed on Straight Street explaining that there is a historical marker at the cemetery. Mr. Ward pointed out that the Town does not control anything other than Queen Street in that area and there might be an easement issue that would need to be worked out for off-site marker placement.

Chairperson Plaag asked Mr. Ward to voice his concern for taking over cemeteries. Mr. Ward said his concern for taking on more properties came from the additional maintenance standpoint because the staff is being stretched out and the Town is having to contract out some of the mowing. Mr. Ward talked about needing some prioritization on adding more historical markers in the Downtown area as well as the increased costs of moving into a historic district that includes a quasi-judicial process and requires the Town Attorney to be involved more and moving staff around to cover the night meetings.

Mr. Ward suggested asking Mr. Chris Miller, Town of Boone GIS Specialist to check on mapping out cemeteries that could be presented to Council on behalf of the HPC.

Chairperson Plaag reminded the HPC that Council has already directed the HPC to work on the Council Store historical marker in 2022.

Chairperson Plaag asked Mr. Ward if the HPC should ask Ms. Meade to attend a HPC meeting or should a member of the HPC meet with Ms. Meade to discuss the historical marker strategies. Mr. Ward suggested that the HPC member meet with Ms. Meade on a time that is convenient with her schedule.

Motion and Vote:

Vice-Chairperson Pollitt made a motion, seconded by Member Watkins to recommend that Chairperson Plaag meet with Ms. Allison Meade, Town Attorney to discuss the historical marker strategies within the next month and report back to the Historic Preservation Commission.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Chairperson Plaag polled the HPC members as follows: Member Bond, Member Watkins, Vice-Chairperson Pollitt and Chairperson Plaag.

Mr. Ward left the meeting at approximately 4:13 p.m.

Chairperson Plaag asked some of the HPC members to work on creating a set of guidelines to evaluate a cemetery to see if a cemetery is of historical significance. Member Bond and Council Liaison Brantz volunteered to work on this assignment and provide a draft to the HPC at their next meeting.

Member Watkins asked Chairperson Plaag about advertising in the newspaper for the public to come forward, if they have a family member buried in their back yard.

Chairperson Plaag asked Ms. Jane Shook, Director of Planning and Inspections, if a press release could be done to help the Town identify all graveyards or cemeteries that are located in the Town limits. He said that he could post

a copy of the press release on the Digital Watauga website once it is released. He noted that there are 3,500 followers on the Digital Watauga website and it would be a great way to help publicize it. Ms. Shook said that she can coordinate with Town Hall to place a press release on the Town website. Chairperson Plaag asked Ms. Shook or Ms. Turner to let him know, when the press release has been processed.

Update on Boone Cemetery Footstone Information for Markers

Member Bond explained that she has identified a vendor and a cost for the footstones. She further explained that the more she thought about the footstones, she realized that the footstones would be an issue for the mowers. She also said that she did not think it was a good idea to commemorate the fence and the division of the cemetery.

Chairperson Plaag explained that when he previously attended the March or April 2021 Council meeting, he relayed this concern for the permanent line in the ground marking the divided fence line. He said that he explained that the permanent marker could be positioned on the imaginary line and say that this marker marks the spot where the division between the two cemeteries once existed. He noted that there was some discussion by some Council members regarding the HPC approaching the Junaluska Community members and asking them the best way to commemorate the marker.

Chairperson Plaag explained that the current plan that was presented to Council was a marker at the front that will identify the cemetery which would include a basic overview of the cemetery and the information could be captured with a QR code via a smartphone for the public to read. He further explained there would be an interpretative panel or a Civil Wars Trail interpretative panel for the Union Soldiers. He said the third panel would be in the cemetery and it would describe the division in the cemetery.

Chairperson Plaag asked Member Bond to go over the information that she found on the cost and placement of the granite foot stones. Member Bond said the foot stones are 6" x 6" x 4" in size. Chairperson Plaag said the division line in the cemetery is 177 feet long, which would require 354 foot stones. If the foot stones are placed in the cemetery the estimated cost would be \$45.00 each for a total of \$16,000.00 not including the maintenance costs. She also noted that the estimated cost is \$35.00 each, if we pick up the foot stones. She also pointed out that the foot stones will cause a maintenance issue in the cemetery. She described the foot stone color as blue-gray and the name of the stone is Blue Ridge. Chairperson Plaag said that this calculation can be reported back to Council on said topic.

Ms. Turner asked Mr. Freed if he still had budget dollars that might be available for the proposed interpretative panels. Mr. Freed said not at this time because it is too close to the end of the budget year. He asked for the HPC to in the future to keep him posted on other topics because he might be able to help them on.

Chairperson Plaag said that he emailed Mr. Drew Gruber, Executive Director of the Civil Wars Trail program to alert him about the untimely death of Ms. Michelle Ligon because she was his contact in Boone, North Carolina. Chairperson Plaag also wanted to ask Mr. Gruber for an update on the potential Civil Wars Trail marker that the HPC had asked him about at a previous meeting.

Town Website

Chairperson Plaag explained that the Town now has two new websites that are now live. The first website is: www.boonehpc.com. He said this website has subpages and links to the Local Historic Landmarks, Historical Markers, Certificate of Appropriateness process, Design Standards which are still being worked on by Staff and Other Projects such as The Boone Street Names project.

Chairperson Plaag said the other website is: www.townofboonedowntownplanningprojects.com. He said this website has subpages and links to the B-1 Downtown Expansion which includes the work products and Zoning Map Amendment and the UDO Text Amendment, Downtown Boone Local Historic District which includes the work

products and the Architectural Survey, Frequently Asked Questions, What's Your View/Feedback and Virtual Town Hall Public Input Calendar. He also pointed out that this website includes a Historic Preservation Testimonial with Mr. John Cooper, owner of Mast General Stores and Historic Preservation Commission Member Bettie Bond. He encouraged the HPC to watch these videos.

Ms. Shook stated that the Planning Staff has made two appointments from the public to discuss the Downtown Planning Projects. She said that she might read those at the May 11, 2021 at 6 p.m. Public Input Session. Member Bond volunteered to attend this meeting and help with the Frequently Asked Questions segment of the said meeting.

Town Streets Projects

Chairperson Plaag noted that he has received draft versions of the Town Street Projects on Linney Street, Grand Boulevard, North Street, Church Street, Appalachian Street and College Avenue combined into a single report, Junaluska Road and Depot Street.

Chairperson Plaag said the outstanding draft Town Street Projects reports are Howard Street and River Street from Member Bond, Queen Street, King Street and Water Street from Chairperson Plaag. He noted that King Street and Water Street reports are partially completed.

Discussion ensued on the length of the reports on Town Streets. Chairperson Plaag asked the HPC if they want to limit the entry on streets that have a complex history to just a couple of paragraphs. Vice-Chairperson Pollitt suggested including the street name, when the street was founded and any interesting facts and add a hyperlink to more information if there is more on the street. Chairperson Plaag noted that the website can be adjusted to handle the hyperlinking process, if necessary.

Discussion ensued on possibly editing all of the draft Town Street Project reports. Chairperson Plaag talked about possibly editing the draft reports to make them all be uniform in voice. He said if so, who would want to volunteer to do it. Council Liaison Brantz agreed that the draft reports should all be uniform in voice. Vice-Chairperson Pollitt agreed that the editing should be done in the draft versions of the Town Street Project. She nominated Member Watkins to work on draft reports. Member Watkins accepted the nomination.

Chairperson Plaag said he would upload the draft Town Street Project reports that he has to Google Drive so that Member Watkins can access them.

Boone 150 Committee

Chairperson Plaag asked Mr. Freed, Chairperson of the Boone 150 Committee to give a brief update on the progress that has been made by the committee. Mr. Freed said that a group of various community members and organizations have met a small number of times through Zoom meetings. Mr. Freed said they have secured the website called www.Boone150.com, they have created a logo. He said they are trying to encourage groups and interested individuals in the community to take on some aspect of the celebration and lead them independently of the Cultural Resources office.

Mr. Freed said that Member Bond had found a 100-year addition by Rachel Coffey. He said that it would be great to create an update on the last 50 years in Boone and share these together at the event. He said the DBDA is talking about some public art projects, the Watauga Arts Council is talking public art panels for the Downtown area that might tell Boone's history. He said that the HPC might be contacted to review the language on the art panels, having live events and having recorded stories of people talking about Boone, having guided tours that tell Boone's history and having some of the schools participate in them, the high school students might do a time capsule project and document the future of Boone in 2022, have actors play a role and do a re-enactment of people buried in a cemetery. He asked to spread the word to interested people that might be willing to help. He

suggested having a religious day at the event and invite choirs from different churches around Boone to give a performance at the Horn in the West Amphitheatre and showcase all of the variety of the different musical styles.

Vice-Chairperson Pollitt suggested possibly including sports that were played 150 years ago in the event.

Informal Discussion

Chairperson Plaag suggested the following agenda items for the next meeting: Junaluska Local Historical Marker Dedication Event, Inventory of Town of Boone Cemeteries, Cemetery Guidelines, Hardin House, Downtown Projects Update, Certificate of Appropriateness, Quasi-Judicial Training, Town Streets Project and Boone 150 Committee.

Member Bond left the meeting at approximately 5:03 p.m.

Adjournment

Vice-Chairperson Pollitt made a motion, seconded by Member Watkins to adjourn the meeting at 5:08 p.m.

Vote:

Aye - All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Chairperson Plaag polled the following HPC members: Member Bond, Member Watkins, Vice-Chairperson Pollitt and Chairperson Plaag.

Eric Plaag, Chairperson

Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary

Communication: May 11, 2021 Meeting Minutes (Approval of Minutes)