

**TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 11, 2019
3:00 PM**

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

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

Others Present: John Ward, Boone Town Manager and Pilar Fotta, Director of Cultural Resources

Call to Order

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

Adoption of Agenda

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

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

Member Bond made a motion, seconded by Member Watkins to approve the May 14, 2019 meeting minutes as written.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

Abstentions – (Members Brantz and Clawson)

The motion passed.

Dan'l Boone Gardens

Ms. Pilar Fotta, Director of Cultural Resources said that she met with Ms. Sarah Gilly and the Dan'l Boone Gardens board on May 21, 2019. Ms. Fotta went over a list of issues that she learned about at this board meeting such as fencing, drainage, grants and music events. She said that the Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture could possibly help with the gardens; and the gardens are trying to make new partnerships and get outside funding. She suggested adding

information about the gardens on the Town website for the public to learn about the gardens. She pointed out that the Town is mowing the grass; but the Town resources are limited to help with the gardens. She talked about the annual costs to run the gardens and she noted that the largest cost is worker's compensation insurance. Chairperson Plaag asked if the Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture could take over the gardens. Ms. Fotta explained that the lease does not allow it. She also explained that there is a 2013 Addendum to the lease; and the local garden clubs are doing all the work. Ms. Fotta said the gardens can be rented for weddings and concerts. Chairperson Plaag asked Ms. Fotta to keep the HPC members updated with any changes to the gardens. Mr. Ward said he would keep Ms. Turner updated on any changes to the gardens.

Ms. Fotta left the meeting around 3:20 p.m.

Survey and District Designation Submittal

Chairperson Plaag noted that due to his work schedule, he has not been able to prepare for the submittal material for the July 5, 2019 Council agenda deadline. He said he is now in Town for an extended period of time and he will work on the submittal for Council agenda.

Chairperson Plaag explained the two separate processes for the survey narrative report and district designation report submittal. He said the survey report goes to the State and does not have to be reviewed by the Town Attorney and the district designation report goes to the State and is reviewed by the Town Attorney.

Chairperson Plaag suggested that there be a public hearing and public information session for the district designation report. Mr. Ward suggested having one meeting at the Council Chambers and one meeting at the Watauga County Library.

Discussion ensued on the 30-day turn-around of the review of the two reports by the State of North Carolina. Chairperson Plaag said on the survey narrative report, the State has to first see that a survey report has been completed. He said it is then up to the Council to determine what they want to designate after the district designation report has been reviewed by the State. Chairperson Plaag suggested getting the public feedback first on the district designation report before sending it to the State. He explained that the State has 30 days to review the report.

Mr. Ward showed concern for funding in the Town budget to create a quasi-judicial process to cover staff time, legal and advertising costs, when there is a Certificate of Appropriateness to be reviewed.

Ms. Turner pointed out that the advertising costs are passed on to the applicant in the new fee schedule that is effective on July 1, 2019.

Chairperson Plaag pointed out that for the meantime for the Downtown area, the Town could follow the Secretary of Interior Standards for their guideline until the draft Downtown Historic Design Standards are completed.

Mr. Ward showed concern for the appearance of the same type of metal awning with cable being used on multiple buildings in the Downtown area giving the same type look to the buildings. The HPC members thought this was acceptable if there is a historical precedence for them.

Member Bond noted that she thought the completion of the District Designation report would occur by September of 2019.

Boone Cemetery Parking

Mr. Ward explained that Appalachian State University is using the Town property for parking beside the cemetery next to Brown Street. He talked about creating designated parking spaces for the cemetery at this location that would be separate from the University. He said that he wants to take back the Town's parking spaces by placing several signs at the cemetery. He said he would work with the Town's parking staff and with the University on the signage. It was the consensus of the HPC members for Mr. Ward to move forward with the signage.

Chairperson Plaag recommended the following ideas to help with the parking issue at the cemetery: placing a lock on the larger gate that would be controlled by the Town or to exchange parking spaces and make it a record that the University maintains the Town driveway and the surfaces of the four parking spaces that are now gravel.

Member Watkins suggested a property swap between the Town and the University and moving the entrance into the cemetery. Mr. Ward said that could possibly take up to one year because the Council of the State would need to be involved.

Turner House

Mr. Ward explained that the Council has discussed the Turner House and they selected a committee which included Council Member Loretta Clawson, Mayor Rennie Brantz, Chairperson Plaag and himself to meet with the County commissions to discuss the Turner House.

Mr. Ward further explained that in trying to coordinate a meeting with the Watauga County Manager, Mr. Deron Geouque and the County Commissioners, he would like to discuss some meeting dates for the Turner House committee to meet with the County commissioners. The following three dates decided upon for Mr. Ward to schedule with Mr. Geouque for the meeting were on June 26, 2019 at 10 a.m., June 28, 2019 at 10 a.m. and July 2, 2019 at 10 a.m.

Chairperson Plaag also noted that if the Turner House is moved, it will lose its eligibility for historical designation.

Mr. Ward said in the Council's discussion of the Turner House, they wanted to encourage the County to not demolish the house. He also said the Council showed concern for taking on another residential structure. He pointed out that about 80 percent of the employee parking is in the Queen Street parking lot and it is a reoccurring sizeable revenue received from it. He talked about a potential property swap and said if it occurred, there would be a significant loss of revenue and there is not an alternative source for permitted employee parking for the Downtown businesses.

Other Matters by Commission Members or Staff

Mr. Ward talked about the expansion of the Municipal Service District. He noted that the Linney House is not currently in the MSD but it can be added.

Chairperson Plaag suggested that the following topics be added to the July 9, 2019 HPC meeting agenda: Turner House Update, Junaluska Marker Update and Historic Design Guidelines.

Adjournment

Member Clawson made a motion, seconded by Member Watkins to adjourn the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Eric Plaag, Chairperson

Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary