

TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
August 6, 2024, 3:00 p.m.
Planning & Inspections Department & WebEx Video Conferencing

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

Council Liaison: Virginia Roseman (via WebEx)

Town Staff in Attendance: Jessica Mitchell-Advanced Planning Specialist, Amy Snider-Customer Service Specialist, and Brandon Wise-Deputy Director

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 3:01 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

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

Vote: Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Chair Smyth made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Bond, to approve the July 9, 2024, HPC meeting minutes.

Vote: Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.

Approval of Written Decisions

Ms. Mitchell provided an explanation about written decisions within the quasi-judicial process for Certificates of Appropriateness (COA) and the HPC's responsibility in reviewing them. Chair Smyth made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Bond, to approve the Qualls Block and 640-642 West King Street Written Decisions.

Vote: Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.

Jones House Local Historic Landmark Designation Report – Final Draft

Riley Ziegler, a former HPC member, presented the final draft of the designation report. Vice-Chair Bond noted that all photo captions have John Walter Jones' name listed as "Watler" instead of "Walter." Ms. Ziegler is to fix the typo on the final submission.

Ms. Ziegler noted the major changes of her report beginning with the southwest elevation architectural description areas, which she drew from the very beneficial book recommendation by Dr. Plaag. Within the architectural description, she explained a change was mostly about a fence not previously talked about on

the west elevation that is housing the AC unit for the Jones House. For the south elevation architectural details, she added material on the four windows missing in previous drafts, and for the north elevation, she mentioned there were minor terminology changes. As discussed, the captions have been added to the photos with help from Dr. Plaag. Chair Smyth stated that the naming schema with the typo seems to be a file name. Ms. Ziegler will follow up with Dr. Plaag, especially in regards to the misspelling of "Walter," but the format was the same as the local historic landmark reports on the R.L. Clay (Rivers) House and the Watauga County Jail previously completed. Discussion included that the file name is needed as a potential reference point when submitting to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Chair Smyth advised that Dr. Plaag may need to make the corrections of Dr. Jones' name on the actual files before submittal if they are links. Ms. Ziegler noted that she will follow up with Dr. Plaag to see if he intended to include the interior photographs of the Jones House currently shown in the report. Chair Smyth stated that if the interior shots are interesting then they might be able to be referenced or documented in the story as significant things on the inside of the house, even if not part of the scope of the project. Ms. Mitchell noted that the interior pictures taken of the Rivers House were not included in that final report, so it may be worthwhile for Ms. Ziegler to double check with Dr. Plaag before final submission.

Ms. Ziegler summarized that the completed changes were spelling error fixes, some rewording throughout, the two new architectural descriptions on the south and west elevations, and the captions for the photos. Aside from the final corrections of minor spelling errors within the photo captions and clarification of the photos used, and pending Dr. Plaag's review, Ms. Ziegler believed that the report is ready for presentation. Chair Smyth and Vice-Chair Bond both agreed and thought the report is fantastic.

Ms. Mitchell advised that there are a couple of options moving forward. The Board can wait for the few remaining changes to review again or, as it has been done on previous reports with only minor changes remaining, the Board can go ahead and recommend submitting to the Town Council with the recommendation that the report be sent by staff to SHPO.

Chair Smyth made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Bond, to present the final draft to Town Council, with the minor changes for Ms. Ziegler to make as discussed, with a recommendation that the report be sent by Staff to the State Historic Preservation Office.

Vote: Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.

Ms. Ziegler inquired on the next steps from here. Ms. Mitchell advised that Ms. Ziegler is to complete the report for the minor changes, with assistance from Dr. Plaag, and when finalized to send it to Ms. Mitchell. Ms. Mitchell explained that she will prepare it as an action request to the Town Council. She explained that action requests are due at the end of each month, so there will be a gap depending on the timing. After Town Council provides consideration of the report, then Ms. Mitchell would send it to SHPO, and they will have thirty calendar days to provide comments back to Ms. Mitchell. Those comments and recommendations from SHPO will be presented to the Board and if there are any changes to the report based off the SHPO's comments, then the HPC can discuss that then. Next, is the recommendation for the report to go through the Public Hearing process, which will include Planning Commission and Town Council, possibly around the November public hearing. Ms. Ziegler stated she would like to be part of the public hearing process, hopefully in person. Ms. Mitchell said there are hybrid options, if necessary, for joining the meeting that might work better with her schedule. Ms. Mitchell continued that after the Public Hearing, the Planning Commission and the HPC will make a recommendation, and then it would go before the Town Council for final approval.

Ms. Mitchell stated that if Ms. Ziegler can return the report by the end of the month it can probably be on the September Town Council agenda. Ms. Ziegler is going to try her very best to get it back and thanked everyone. Vice-Chair Bond expressed her appreciation for Ms. Ziegler's work.

Staff Updates

Statement of Conformity Report

Ms. Mitchell noted that within the Planning and Inspection's new permitting system, she had figured out how to reformat the report to reflect monthly Statement of Conformity applications, rather than the format of the previous reports in the packet. She added there were no submittals for July and moving forward the report provided for the members will be monthly.

Other Staff Updates

Ms. Mitchell provided an update for this month's Town Council meeting, which should include the Chair and Vice-Chair applications and the Stoneman's Raid interpretative panel revised text. She will update the Board from those items at the September meeting. After the Council's consideration she can get the Stoneman's Raid interpretative panel application signed by the parties that need to sign it and any other documentation that is needed for submittal with the Civil War Trails program.

Ms. Mitchell discussed upcoming events, noting the Hellbender Mural reveal on August 23rd from 4-6 pm and the community events listed by Vice-Chair Bond, including Ron Rush at the Appalachian Theater on August 7th, One Night in Memphis on August 9th, Doc Watson's Day on August 17th, the Gatsby Gala on August 23rd, the Lovill House from 3-5pm on September 15th, and the 50th Year celebration of the Friends of the Library at the library parking lot on September 21st from 11-4pm.

Ms. Mitchell mentioned that future training dates would be determined as the HPC is waiting for new members. She stated there is a student application going to Town Council next week, and based on Council's approval, she would hold orientation as soon as possible so they can join the September meeting. She explained that the HPC may need to complete the three webinars to meet CLG requirements this year. Ms. Mitchell noted that Council Member Roseman wanted to participate in the training as well and will try to get those trainings times out ahead of time for scheduling. Chair Smyth advised he would not mind redoing some of the training with a new member as well.

Council Member Roseman provided details from the July Town Council meeting where the subject of county residents or business owners potentially joining the HPC was broached. Council Member Roseman clarified that it is a state regulation because this is a historical board that conducts quasi-judicial proceedings, so members must be residents of the Town of Boone. Chair Smyth thanked Council Member Roseman for checking. Council Member Roseman also recommended that the Board stay at five members due to the decision making powers and advised that she had solicited for two people to apply. She apologized that she was unable to bring an application so far, saying it is the Council's job to help find individuals for the HPC, and the Council is seeking to find individuals with an understanding of Boone's past. Vice-Chair Bond regrets that the ETJ is no longer available as there were good and involved members from that area. Vice-Chair Bond also remarked that she reached out to her contacts in the history department and within the Watauga County Historical Society, noting their current efforts to increase membership.

Mr. Wise updated the Board on previously approved COAs. The Qualls Block building (595, 597, 605 W King St.) is currently under construction and Goofyfoot Taproom (525 W King St.) has submitted plans. The previous Haircut 101 site (174 S Depot St) is moving forward and have to submit plans this week. The public bathrooms outside of Town Hall (567 W King St.) have the plumbing complete and they are moving to finish up final details.

HPC Member Updates

Chair Smyth talked with Bob Lee, a member of the Raleigh Historic Development Commission, and now has a greater understanding of the purpose and function of regulations and how you get everything

accomplished. He expressed appreciation to get the perspective of someone with a different historic commission.

Vice-Chair Bond mentioned her discussion with the architect, John Arnold, for the \$3-million-dollar interior library renovation awaiting the County Commission's decision, and she mentioned it is really interesting to see things through different viewpoints.

Chair Smyth would like to get Watauga County Historical Society over to the Arts and Craft house in Blowing Rock thinking it would be a great interest. Smyth discussed some of his family legacy and the upcoming 125th anniversary of his family's house and being intrigued to find the history of his family interactions.

Other Discussion

Ms. Mitchell wanted to be open and transparent that she did get a response regarding the HPC's meeting times after announcing to contacts in the ASU History Department about the open student member position. She mentioned that the comment included that the full year commitment and the meeting time can be a challenge for students and they suggested a 3:30 pm or 4:00 pm meeting time with a semester-long commitment. However, Ms. Mitchell stated that since a student application has been received, it might not be the time to think about changing. The HPC discussed how the shorter involvement does not really allow someone to learn the quasi-judicial process and understand the Board, and members expressed that a later time constraint would be more of a hardship on staff. The HPC also discussed that potential and future members would have to be approved by the Town Council and there would be value from more long-term residents that are vested in the community over primarily student involvement.

Vice-Chair Bond started a discussion regarding upcoming meeting dates. She mentioned that she is going to be out of town for the September 10th meeting. Ms. Mitchell confirmed that there are no COA cases for September, so there would not be a meeting on September 10th. Ms. Mitchell also stated that Town offices are open after Labor Day on Tuesday, September 3rd so that meeting would be held as normal. Ms. Mitchell also confirmed that there is no problem with the November meeting date falling on election day as the HPC meetings are not held in Council Chambers, which is typically a voting location. Chair Smyth has no conflicts on his calendar for the remainder of the year.

Council Member Roseman voiced congratulations to Ms. Bettie Bond, recipient of the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, noting she was more than deserving with everything she does for the community.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice-Chair Bond made a motion, seconded by Chair Smyth, to adjourn the meeting at 3:53 p.m.

Vote: Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.

Vardell Smyth, Chair

Amy Snider, Board Clerk