

**TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 10, 2021, 3:00 p.m.**

Historic Preservation Commission Members in Attendance:

Chair Eric Plaag and Chuck Watkins

Council Liaisons:

Rennie Brantz and Virginia Roseman

Town Staff in Attendance:

Jane Shook-Director of Planning & Inspections and Marlene Crosby-Board Secretary

Others Present:

Call to Order

Chair Eric Plaag called the meeting of the Boone Historic Preservation Commission, held via WebEx, a video conferencing software, to order on Tuesday, August 10, 2021, at 3:03 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

Member Watkins made a motion, seconded by Chair Plaag, to adopt the agenda as amended by removing item five.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Chair Plaag polled the members as follows: Member Watkins and Chair Plaag

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Member Watkins made a motion, seconded by Chair Plaag, to approve the July 13, 2021 meeting minutes as written.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Chair Plaag polled the members as follows: Member Watkins and Chair Plaag

Public Comment

No individuals requested the opportunity to speak during public comment.

HPC Meeting Time and Date Adjustment

Discussion ensued on moving the date and time of the HPC meeting. Chair Plaag pointed out that having an HPC meeting at 3 p.m. on Tuesday eliminates most Appalachian State University students from applying for an HPC student position. He said that he believed that we might have more interest from other in the architecture or historical field if the meetings were held in the evening. He recommended that the HPC meeting be moved from the afternoon to the evening for this reason.

Chair Plaag noted that if the district is approved at the September 2021 meeting, he said he thought many COA applications would be coming in the months to follow. He also noted that by the October of 2021 HPC meeting, the HPC might be reviewing COA applications in a quasi-judicial format. He said by making this move now to evening meetings; it will be our opportunity to get the word out to people in the historic preservation or the public history program at ASU that there is a student position available.

Chair Plaag said that Ms. Shook would complete the press release once Council approves the proposed meeting date and time.

Motion and Vote:

Chair Plaag made a motion, seconded by Member Watkins, to recommend to Council to schedule the regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission on the first Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. beginning in October of 2021.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Ms. Shook indicated she would try and put in an Action Request for the August Town Council meeting though it may be September before Council considered the request.

Hayes, Bryan, Greene Cemetery Update

Chair Plaag said that he had met remotely with Ms. Allison Meade, Town Attorney, to discuss the best options for the various cemetery issues. And that he hoped to have a report from Ms. Meade on her recommendations for the appropriate course of action by the September 2021 HPC meeting.

Chair Plaag said that he and Ms. Meade discussed the following options for the cemetery: “interpretive signage within cemetery boundary, a historical marker placed at the roadway near the cemetery, and/or a historical marker with greater visibility along King Street, perhaps near the intersection with Straight Street.”

Other Cemeteries Update (including Press Release)

Chair Plaag reminded the HPC that the Town had tasked them to inventory cemeteries in the town limits and draft a proposed set of recommendations, preferably by the end of the year. Ms. Shook reported that the press release and the website were still under construction. She noted she needed to consult with the Town Attorney on a few of the items requested on the website before completing and presenting the items. Ms. Shook was hopeful that she could offer the items for review in September.

Cemetery Guidelines for Historic Designation/Acquisition

Chair Plaag asked Council Liaison Brantz the status of his and Member Bond's work on the cemetery guidelines for historic designation and acquisition. Council Liaison Brantz indicated that work was ongoing. Council Liaison Brantz said they are looking at things like transcendent importance, political figures, economic leaders, the age of the cemetery, distinctive design, the association of historical events, and family connections. Chair Plaag said that hopefully, in the next month or following month, we could have a refined list of proposed guidelines to consider and recommend to the Council.

Town Streets Project Update

Chair Plaag asked Member Watkins for an update on the Town Streets Project. Member Watkins said that he has been working on another project, but he will begin working on the Town Streets Project. Chair Plaag said that he would check the status of said project with Member Watkins at the September HPC meeting.

Consideration of Certificate of Appropriateness Application

Ms. Shook explained that she needs to discuss with Ms. Meade a couple of things that the HPC proposed to add to the application. Ms. Shook said that she would complete this task by the September public hearing and include the information in the public hearing packet.

Quasi-Judicial Training Update

Ms. Shook said the School of Government would hold a remote training session on September 13, 2021, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. for quasi-judicial board work. Discussion ensued on the Commission's participation in the training. Chair Plaag and Council Member Roseman expressed interest in attending.

The discussion transitioned over to include additional training materials and opportunities Ms. Shook had received from the State Historic Preservation Office and the possibility of coordinating a date and time to watch some of the material together. Ms. Shook asked the HPC if they were interested in having a longer meeting in September or a special meeting in October to watch the videos. Chair Plaag preferred to attend a special meeting in October. Ms. Shook noted that Member Bond would not be able to attend the training session in September.

Ms. Shook told the HPC that she would pick three days in October for a special meeting. She said she would email out those three dates, and we could work out the best date to schedule the special meeting.

Historic Preservation Commission Priorities List

Discussion ensued on tasks and priorities assigned to the Historic Preservation Commission. Chair Plaag indicated that he wanted to ensure that the Commission kept track and prioritized tasks for effectiveness and efficiency.

After some discussion, the group agreed to prioritize the identified tasks and identified who would be responsible for beginning work on each assignment:

1. Historical Marker Report for Council's Store (Council Member Roseman)
2. Landmark Designation Report for the Watauga County Jail (Chair Plaag)
3. Report for Boone Cemetery Interpretative Panels
4. Possible Designation of the Hayes, Bryan, Greene Cemetery
5. Landmark Designation Report for the R.L. Clay Rivers House
6. Landmark Designation Report for the Jones House
7. Complete the Boone Cemetery Survey and share data with Mr. Chris Miller, GIS Specialist (Chair Plaag)
8. Complete the First Phase of the Boone Streets Project and Place the Information Online
9. Pursue Certified Local Government Status through the State of North Carolina (Planning Staff)

Discussion ensued on the variety and amount of tasks assigned to the Commission outside of any development review associated with a Certificate of Appropriateness. Discussion ensued on the possibility of interns assisting with some of the work. Ms. Shook explained though the Planning and Inspections Department is short-staffed at this time, the Department was currently advertising for a planner position to do special projects, which would assist the Department in completing current and future tasks assigned to the Commission.

Downtown Projects Update

Ms. Shook said that the special public hearing regarding Downtown Projects moved from August 23 to September 27 at 6 p.m. She said the Community Appearance Commission and the Historic Preservation Commission, and the Council would be invited to attend the virtual special public hearing.

Ms. Shook noted that the Staff is working on getting the maps and text changed based on last month's HPC recommendations to the minor and major work applications.

Board Officers Nominations

Discussion ensued on Historic Preservation Chair and Vice-Chair recommendations to Council. The Commission had two applications from current members to consider: one from Chair Plaag for the Chair position and one from Vice-Chair Bond for the Vice-Chair position.

Member Watkins made a motion, seconded by Chair Plaag, to accept the two board nominations from Chair Eric Plaag and Member Bettie Bond and forward them to Council for their consideration.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Ms. Shook said she would create the necessary action requests and send them to the Town Clerk to get them on the Council's September meeting agenda.

Adjournment

Chair Plaag made a motion, seconded by Member Watkins, to adjourn the meeting at 4:51 p.m.

Vote:

Aye - All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Eric Plaag, Chair

Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary