TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
October 5, 2021, 6:00 p.m.

Historic Preservation Commission Members in Attendance: Chair Eric Plaag, Vice-Chair Bettie Bond, and Chuck Watkins
Council Liaisons: Rennie Brantz
Town Staff in Attendance: Jane Shook-Director of Planning & Inspections, Christy Turner-Senior Planner, and Marlene Crosby-Board Secretary

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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, October 5, 2021, at 6:09 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda
Chair Plaag made a motion, seconded by Member Watkins, to adopt the agenda as written.

Vote:

Aye – All
Nay – None
The motion passed.

Approval of Meeting Minutes
Chair Plaag made a motion, seconded by Member Watkins, to approve the September 14, 2021 meeting minutes as written.

Vote:

Aye – (Plaag and Watkins)
Nay – None
Abstained- (Bond)
The motion passed.

Public Comment
No individuals requested the opportunity to speak during public comment.

Commission Vacancies
Chair Plaag asked Member Watkins if he would consider to continue to serve as a member of the Historic Preservation Commission. Member Bond encouraged Member Watkins to stay on the Commission. Chair Watkins thanked the HPC for continuing to consider him for membership.

The HPC discussed other applicants for the HPC, such as the one that Ms. Turner spoke with about joining the HPC. Ms. Turner said she would contact the applicant to see when she would submit her application to Town Hall.

Town Cemeteries

Ms. Shook told the HPC that she would email the HPC when the press release and the project page on the HPC website were ready. Ms. Shook said she had been working on a narrative and the project page on the website. She said the project page for the cemetery survey would go live when the press release is completed.

Chair Plaag said it would be helpful to make it known to the public on the project webpage the cemeteries the Town already has knowledge of.

Ms. Shook told the HPC that the Town could search the GIS system to identify every cemetery on the list. She said she would try to create a map that shows the cemeteries that the Town already knows about within the Town's corporate limits.

Town Streets

Chair Plaag asked Member Watkins about the Town streets project. Member Watkins said he was in the same place he was last time, except that he read the material that Chair Plaag sent him. Member Watkins said he would be able to focus his attention on this project soon. Chair Plaag reported that he also had several streets to work on, and he would get to those soon.

Discussion ensued on Sanborn maps. Member Watkins asked if it was illegal to reproduce sections of Sanborn Maps in other publications. Chair Plaag said the public had reached the point that the 1928 Sanborn Maps of Boone are presumably clear of copyright law because of how copyright law was written for that period. Chair Plaag said the 1949 Sanborn maps are more complicated and are still probably under copyright law. He said he has heard that the company that owns the copyright to the Sanborns has recently released a bunch of maps from copyright and made those maps available. He said that he believes that there is no permissions requirement for those maps as long as you are not using the maps for a commercial purpose. He said that he thought that someone only has to cite that it's a Sanborn map in the object for which it is being used. He added that he wanted to check on that statement before the HPC used the maps.

Hayes-Bryan-Greene Cemetery

Chair Plaag reported that he provided Ms. Meade, Town Attorney, the information she needed to review for the Hayes-Bryan-Greene Cemetery. Ms. Meade said that she had not had a chance to look at the information yet. Chair Plaag said that Ms. Mary Moretz had emailed him about the disposition of the cemetery information. He explained to Ms. Moretz that the HPC is waiting for feedback from Ms. Meade on interpretation options and possible historical marker options for denoting the said cemetery. He told her that the HPC is in a holding pattern until they hear from Ms. Meade.

Chair Plaag said the HPC could start the process of writing the historical marker report, while the HPC is waiting for Ms. Meade to provide the interpretative options. He asked if any HPC member could go out and start an onsite inventory of whose stones are present in the cemetery. He said that whoever goes to the cemetery would need to take photographs while there. Ms. Shook reported that a new Planner, Ms. Jessica Mitchell, would be starting on Monday, and Ms. Mitchell would be the staff liaison for the HPC. Ms. Shook said she would task Ms. Mitchell with this step. Chair Plaag asked for Ms. Mitchell to call him before she went out to complete the inventory. Chair Plaag said that he had the backpacks with digital cameras in them at his house. He said that the cameras had all

the pictures of the Boone Cemetery on them, and he had hoped to get out in the fall to complete that project. Ms. Shook noted the Planning Department had the tools needed to complete the photographic survey.

Chair Plaag said that his brother, Mr. Gary Plaag was interested in helping with some of the inventory work. The HPC members asked if Mr. Gary Plaag was interested in serving on the HPC. Chair Plaag said he and his brother had talked about it, but he realized that there are specific requirements that he would need to meet for him to be able to serve on the HPC. Ms. Shook noted there might be some concern about the quasi-judicial hearings but that she would check with Ms. Meade on that topic.

Cemetery Guidelines

Chair Plaag asked Council Liaison Brantz and Member Bond if they had been able to work on the cemetery guidelines. Council Liaison Brantz and Member Bond said they had had a chance to work on them. Council Liaison Brantz read some of the items they had already worked on: transcendent importance, political figures, economic leaders, age of the cemetery, distinctive design, association with historical events, and family connections. Council Liaison Brantz said he had researched cemeteries across the US and the best one was in North Dakota. He said that he would further explore what is in the State of North Dakota. Chair Plaag talked about the rich preservation history of Western cemeteries and their wooden headstones. Chair Plaag said the question would be about funerary art, which would most likely be stone. Chair Plaag noted another issue that occurs, particularly in rural areas, which is the use of fieldstones that have been painted or etched. He said the historically black section of the Boone Cemetery has fieldstones in it that were intended to mark gravesites.

Downtown Projects

Ms. Shook reported that the Town Council and Planning Commission met on Monday, September 27, 2021, to hear the text and map amendment cases for the Downtown projects for the B1 Downtown expansion project and the Downtown local Historic District. After the Public Hearing, she said the Planning Commission met again on Wednesday, September 29, 2021, where they made recommendations for approval with some changes to the text and boundaries. She said the HPC only made two minor changes to the Downtown Local Historic District. Chair Plaag explained that one of the changes was to remove the word "block" from the text for commercial Downtown buildings. She said the other change was to add some language to the existing standards for the local Historic Landmarks. She said she needed to check with Ms. Meade about this proposed change. She said the next step in the process is to present the proposed changes to Town Council on October 21, 2021. She noted that the Downtown Planning Projects web page had been updated on the Town website, and it includes links to the meeting packets containing the said projects' information. Chair Plaag asked Ms. Shook if she had received any public feedback on the boundary issues. Ms. Shook reported that she had heard from four or five individuals on said topic. She said they were satisfied or not satisfied with the Planning Commission's recommendations based upon the individual.

Chair Plaag pointed out that an application for a Starbucks had been submitted to the Planning and Inspections Department. He said the proposed location for the Starbucks is near the corner of Councill Street and King Street. He said when the application was submitted; the zoning allowed it to be a by-right development that allows a drive-through. He noted that the applicant still has to meet all of the requirements of the Unified Development Ordinance. He said one of those considerations is a traffic impact analysis. He said there is no trigger for a variance

or a conditional district rezoning to accommodate what is proposed for that site. He said that he has a concern for the potential traffic impact for people waiting to get their coffee. Ms. Shook did not speak about the specific application but pointed out that there were reasons why the Town undertook the B1 expansion project within that area so that is zoned for appropriate development.

Chair Plaag asked Ms. Shook if someone had a Historic Landmark in a district and wanted to pursue a conditional district application, should they obtain a certificate of appropriateness first or pursue the conditional district first. Ms. Shook confirmed that the certificate of appropriateness should be sought first. Ms. Shook asked Ms. Christy Turner, Senior Planner, if the applicants could submit other applications concurrently as the certificate of appropriateness is being reviewed. Ms. Turner answered that they could submit other applications while the COA was in process.

Chair Plaag asked about the quasi-judicial training for the HPC members who had not received any recent training. Ms. Shook explained that she and Ms. Meade had discussed providing some training modules from the School of Government and some training from the State Historic Preservation Office.

Ms. Shook told the HPC that the earliest they would hear COA applications would be potentially December of 2021. Ms. Shook asked the HPC if they wanted to have the quasi-judicial training during the first two hours of their November 2021 HPC meeting and then continue with their regular HPC meeting. She also said or have a separate meeting for the said training. It was the consensus of the HPC to have a separate meeting for the said training. Chair Plaag suggested having the meeting for the training be dependent upon the schedules of the people being trained. He said with the new HPC member possibly coming on board and not knowing their schedule, he was hesitant to pick a date at this time for the training. Ms. Shook said after the Council appoints the HPC board member, she will contact the HPC with several dates that Ms. Meade is available. She said she would get the feedback from the HPC individually on what date and time would work best for the said training.

COA Application

Ms. Shook pointed out the changes made to the application for major work to be completed in Boone's local Historic District. She pointed out that the proposed changes were made to the signature line and the property authorization section. Ms. Shook read through the changes and added that Ms. Meade suggested linking the Design Guidelines to the application. Ms. Shook said once these proposed changes are approved that the application could be linked to the town website. Ms. Shook said she would be sending the application to Council along with the associated fees. She said the base fee might be around $374.00, not including the direct advertising costs for the legal ad and the mailing of the adjoining property owner letters. Chair Plaag added that the minor works would be handled under a Statement of Conformity. Ms. Shook said that an applicant performing repair and maintenance would need to get a permit to monitor the repairs by the Planning and Inspections Department. She said she would work with Ms. Turner on a fee to charge for the minor application.

Councill Store Marker

Chair Plaag noted that Council Liaison Roseman would not be attending this meeting. He said that she is working on the Councill Store historical marker. He said he expected that she would be able to present an update on the marker at the November HPC meeting. Member Bond reminded the HPC that we needed to accomplish

something on the marker before Christmas because the Boone 150 Celebration is on January 23, 2022. She suggested that the marker be ordered before spring. Ms. Shook reminded the HPC that she would task Ms. Mitchell to assist where needed with the Boone 150 Celebration. Ms. Shook asked if the HPC would be making the old Watauga Jail another local landmark. Chair Plaag said that he is working on it. Ms. Shook suggested that it would be good to get Mr. Chris Miller, GIS Specialist, to create a map of the Local Historical Markers and put the map on the website. Ms. Shook said this same map could be used for the Boone 150 Celebration.

Chair Plaag reviewed a task list that the HPC had made in August of 2021. He said the Councill Store Historical Marker and the interpretive markers at the Boone Cemetery were on the list. He noted that the HPC does not know if one will be a Civil War Trails marker. He suggested that the HPC begin planning what they want to do with the historical markers without the Civil War Trails. He also talked about placing a marker at the Downtown Boone Post Office where the James Councill house was and where the Stoneman's raid took place. Member Bond reported that the Appalachian Theatre would be showing movies in the Spring and Fall that had been filmed in the Boone area.

Watauga County Jail Landmark Designation

Chair Plaag met with Ms. Angela Kelly at Proper Restaurant to discuss the landmark designation. He said that he had previously taken photographs of the restaurant for the survey in 2015. He also said that the State Historic Preservation Office in Raleigh was generally opposed to these types of properties being listed in the National Register when they came to the Western part of the State, but that personnel had turned over and that it was less of a concern now. Chair Plaag reported that he had reshot the field photography and the write-up for this landmark designation, and he would present it at the HPC's November meeting. He said between the marker and this landmark designation, these are some items we can celebrate early in the coming year without being dependent on the weather. He said the other landmarks the HPC has in the queue to work on are the Rivers House and the Jones House.

Discussion ensued on landmark designation plaques. Ms. Shook asked about the plaques for the landmark designations and if the HPC had decided on plaque types. Chair Plaag reported that for the Downtown Boone Post Office plaque, the HPC decided on the plaque's design from Erie Landmark Company because it was appropriate to the building. He said, for example, that particular plaque would not look good on the Linney House because it is a residential structure and not a commercial structure. He suggested guiding people to the signage that is appropriate to the structure. He said the other option is having a designated plaque for landmarks properties for Boone. Ms. Shook noted that there are now four landmark properties in Boone. She suggested tasking Ms. Mitchell with researching plaque types. Chair Plaag suggested that Ms. Mitchell also research plaque types for a large commercial property and for a smaller residential property. Chair Plaag pointed out that the type of plaque put on the Jones House and the Linney House should be different from what was put on the Downtown Boone Post Office. Member Bond said she remembered that the HPC had decided that they did not want Daniel Boone with a coonskin hat on the plaque. Ms. Shook noted that she wanted to give the proper guidance on the plaques when the questions came in about them.

Chair Plaag said that if the Downtown District is designated, this would be an excellent opportunity to revisit the idea of plaques for contributing buildings to the district with a short paragraph of what's significant about the

building. He added that he thought the Downtown Boone Development Association would want to take that up and let tax revenues pay for it. Member Watkins said that he found the plaques in Hendersonville to be problematic; he noted that their plaques looked very mechanical to him. He said that he noticed that no one was looking at their plaques.

Chair Plaag said in Columbia, South Carolina, they had taken their most interesting stories of their historic district and created interpretive panels that told the reader something very unusual about a block of buildings. Ms. Shook noted that she thought the plaques could be important to the property owners who expend funds to meet the standards landmark designation. She thought it would be important to be able recognize those property owners.

After the Council meeting, Ms. Shook said she would send out a group email to let the HPC, CAC, and the Planning Commission know what happened with the Downtown districts.

Other Discussion

Chair Plaag suggested the following topics for the next meeting: Press Release for Website/Cemetery Inventory Project, Town Streets, Hayes, Bryan, Greene Cemetery, Cemetery Interpretation Guidelines, Downtown Projects, Councill Store Historical Marker, and Watauga County Jail.

Adjournment

Member Watkins made a motion, seconded by Member Bond, to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Vote:

Aye - All
Nay – None
The motion passed.

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Eric Plaag, Chair **Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary**