

TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
December 7, 2021, 6:00 p.m.

Historic Preservation Commission Members in Attendance:

Chair Eric Plaag, Vice-Chair Bettie Bond, and Chuck Watkins

Student Member: Izabela Willis

Council Liaisons: Rennie Brantz and Virginia Roseman

Town Staff in Attendance:

Jane Shook-Director of Planning & Inspections, Jessica Mitchell-Long-Range/Special Projects Planner, Christy Turner-Senior Planner, and Marlene Crosby-Board Secretary

Others in Attendance: Mark Freed-Director of Cultural Resources, Amber Bateman-Director of Watauga County Arts Council, Tommy Lee, Candi Woodruff, and Jenny Collette

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, December 7, 2021, at 6:01 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

Member Watkins made a motion, seconded by Member Willis to adopt the agenda as written.

Vote: Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Member Watkins made a motion, seconded by Chair Plaag, to approve the November 9, 2021 meeting minutes as written.

Vote: Aye – (Plaag and Watkins)

Nay – None

Abstained- (Willis)

The motion passed.

Public Comment

Chair Plaag pointed out that he thought that most of the visitors attending this virtual meeting wanted to speak on specific agenda matters. He suggested deferring their comments until their item on the agenda came up. He said this would direct the HPC into a conversation about those particular items instead of hearing their comments during public comment. He asked the HPC for consensus to his suggestion on handling public comment for the Watauga Arts Council Mural Consultation and the Collette-Woodruff P.C. Sign Consultation. There were no objections to it from the HPC or the applicants.

Chair Plaag asked if others wanted to speak under public comment. He said hearing none, public comment was closed, with the understanding that there is reserved opportunity for comment for the applicants. He noted that the Chair would recognize them when said topics arose during the meeting.

Watauga Arts Council Mural Consultation

Ms. Christy Turner, Senior Planner, explained that the Watauga County Arts Council is asking for a consultation to place a mural on Howard Street. She noted that they had submitted an application, a description of the project, and a photo in the meeting packet. She opened the floor for questions regarding the consultation.

Chair Plaag explained that the HPC is entering the phase of being a quasi-judicial board. He further said that the HPC has some Rules of Procedure for the formal Certificate of Appropriateness cases being put in place. He said the HPC does not have formal Rules of Procedure beyond the existing Rules of Procedure for a consultation. He said the best way to proceed if there is no objection from the HPC members is to let the people requesting the consultation have an opportunity to give an overview of their proposal. He opened the floor for their presentations.

Ms. Amber Bateman, Director of the Watauga Arts Council, explained that the mural's purpose is to showcase features of the High Country that make this community a unique and desirable destination. She said that because the Appalachian Mountain Brewery started in Boone, North Carolina, the brewery wanted to sponsor a mural to send a message of thanks and love to the community from which it was "born." She said the imagery in the large postcard mural is meant to show Appalachian Mountain Brewery's connection with the High Country of North Carolina. She said the basic idea of the image is to bring different aspects together of what makes our community great. She said the proposed location for the mural is on the east side of the building, located at 182 Howard Street. She noted that she had been informed that the dumpster at the location could not be moved, but it could be screened. She said the business owners would work with the Town on the color palette. She said the original mural image they had made had lines on it. It was addressed to "Wildwood Community Market," the business occupying the building.

Ms. Bateman said she felt that discussion needed to occur regarding the purpose of a painted sign and a mural. She thought a painted sign would advertise a business, but a mural takes on a different purpose. She said that when trying to propose a mural for Downtown Boone, murals are occasionally sponsored. She said they would like to insert a stamp from the business on the murals creatively.

Ms. Bateman asked for direction from the HPC regarding their proposal. She explained that the community is continually asking about the lack of an art presence in the High Country. She said the Watauga Arts Council found this proposed mural as an opportunity to begin working with the HPC and the Town on the process to have more of an art presence in the community. She noted that Mr. Andrew Green, the building owner, did approve the proposed mural on the building. She also pointed out that the Wildwood Community Market business owners approved of the mural on the building.

Chair Plaag explained the things under the HPC's purview to review or what might need to go to the Planning Department, Planning Commission, or the Board of Adjustment. He explained to Ms. Bateman that two options were proposed for the mural. He continued that one option was to paint directly onto the building or mount wood or other material framed sign almost like a framed painting to hang on the side of the building.

Chair Plaag referred to the adopted standards for the historic district. He explained that state statute required these standards to be adopted along with the historic district. He explained that these standards were written in consultation with guidance from the National Park Service, which oversees historic districts generally and standards and guidelines for districts. In Section 4.1 of these standards, he pointed out that it is never appropriate to paint masonry materials such as brick, concrete block, cast concrete, or stone that were historically unpainted, including masonry associated with foundations. He said we do not know if there is a historical precedent for masonry painting in the building's original historic content because there are no images of the building. He said it is difficult for the HPC to recommend or approve something that would be applying paint directly to the building,

where there is no historical precedent for something similar on the building. He believed this building had been painted for a long time. He deferred to the concept that this concrete block does not qualify as unpainted masonry. He read from the standards that if there is a precedent for it being painted, it should be completed using colors that can be documented with original historic photographic evidence, or analysis of original paint samples. He recommended that the applicant not spend time or funds analyzing paint samples because they are not always conclusive.

Ms. Bateman said she felt like there are plenty of examples of other historic towns that have murals that possibly did not have an original mural on a building. Based on that guideline, she said that unless the building already had a mural from a historical era of significance, it will never have a mural applied to it. She believed this would affect the desire for the community to want to produce art in the community. Chair Plaag asked her to allow him to walk her through the current standards that are in place. He explained that these standards are what the HPC must follow when considering a consultation on a case. He said it does not mean the answer is an absolute yes or no to what is being proposed.

Chair Plaag explained in Section 9.3 that there are no specific paint colors within the district. He said there is some UDO guidance on paint colors. He noted that the standards require a selection of paint colors appropriate for the building's architectural style and complement neighboring buildings. In general, color should function as a method of contrasting among different materials and architectural elements that make up the building; additionally, contrasting colors that accent architectural details and entrances are discouraged, except for those cases where the design element was common to the historic architectural style of an existing historic property. He said the standard we currently have does not speak specifically to murals. He said that the HPC would have to say, concerning painting directly on the masonry, that the proposed mural has no proven historical precedent, meaning there is no history of murals on this side of the building. He said a mural of that type would not have been typical to apply to a building of this particular architectural style. He said it is difficult for the HPC to find reasoning within the standards to approve the mural if it's proposed to be painted directly on the building.

Chair Plaag referred to a section in the commercial standards on ghost ads. He said they are old advertisements or old murals that still survive. He said one is on the upper east side of the old Newton's building next to the fire station on King Street. He said this kind of artifact should be preserved. He explained that this is not the kind of situation we are talking about in this consultation. He said that in this case, we are talking about a new thing, not something that already exists.

Chair Plaag reviewed Section 8 of the Streetscapes Section. He discussed how this section is separate from the Commercial section, which specifically addresses signage; this section was primarily written to address detached signage that overhangs the public way or is mounted to a building in the B1.

Chair Plaag explained that as the ordinance is currently written, it does not apply to painting murals directly on buildings. He said there is a gap in the ordinance, and he said he feels that Council probably needs to consider this. He mentioned this would include soliciting input from the HPC on the issue of murals, specifically new murals being applied to historic buildings.

Chair Plaag said he felt the fastest way for the mural to be installed involves the second option presented, which is to have a framed mural mounted to the side of the building. He asked the Staff how approval occurred for the mural on the side of the Boone Mini Mall on W. King Street. Ms. Shook explained that the mural was a Downtown Boone Development Association project. She said a zoning permit was not required because the DBDA, as a government entity, is exempt from the ordinance requirements. She noted that a building permit was required to attach the framed mural to the building.

After reviewing the sign guidelines, Ms. Bateman said it was very clear that those guidelines were not set for art but signage on buildings for advertisement purposes. She asked Chair Plaag if now is the time to begin a conversation with Council to consider policies and procedures that view art as something different from an applied sign. Chair Plaag explained there is an opportunity to discuss with the Council, with the input of the HPC regarding murals in the historic district or historical landmarks. This conversation would also include consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office and potentially the National Park Service. He said knowing how these processes work, it may take up to a year, although there is a project wanting to be done now. He suggested finding a solution for said project that works within the current standards and UDO regulations while also working on the longer conversation about revising the standards, if desired, for future projects.

Vice-Chair Bond joined the meeting at approximately 6:20 p.m.

Chair Plaag said he recommended working with the Staff on a possible solution. He told Ms. Bateman that for this specific project, for example, she may want to contact the DBDA and give them her proposal for the mural. He suggested that Ms. Bateman let them know that the building owner agrees with the said proposal. He noted that Ms. Bateman could ask the DBDA if they would request that the said mural be approved to be mounted on the building. He referred to Ms. Shook and the Council Liaisons to see if they thought this would be a faster solution than waiting a year or more with no guarantee of a new standard, while still meeting all district requirements. Ms. Shook agreed that it was potentially an option. She said she would like to talk with Mr. John Ward, Town Manager, and Ms. Lane Moody, Downtown Boone Development Coordinator about it. Ms. Shook said that the Town Attorney might need to give some input on signs because of the current, strict sign regulations. Ms. Bateman said that she and the mural artist, Mr. Tommy Lee, are more interested in the fastest route and willing to go with the framed mural option. Vice-Chair Bond agreed this is the quickest way while pursuing the potential long-range revision of the standards. She agreed that the issue of murals would keep coming up, and it would be better to set a standard, specifically for murals and other art projects in Downtown Boone.

Chair Plaag explained to Ms. Bateman that it would not be allowed to apply paint to an unpainted masonry surface from a preservation standpoint. He explained that using paint color on an unpainted masonry building damages the building long and short term.

Ms. Bateman said that she had been in conversation with Mr. John Cooper, owner of Mast General Store, regarding the white doors on Depot Street. In honor of the Boone 150 Celebration, she said the Watauga Council Arts Council wanted to partner with the Junaluska Community, to put barn quilts on the doors, or put a Wayne Trapp mural on the white doors. Ms. Bateman discussed these projects involving the HPC during the Boone 150 Celebration.

Chair Plaag reiterated that the historic district design standards do not regulate paint color, except that the colors should have a historical precedent. He said the said standards do not address murals, except for what has already been discussed. He suggested a coordinated conversation between the Watauga Arts Council, Planning and Inspections Department, Council, and the HPC regarding future public art in Downtown Boone.

Ms. Shook explained that current UDO standards regulate what is defined as works of art but not public art. She said she believed the historic district added a layer of review that had not been done before. Chair Plaag said decisions on public art should be limited to approving the design according to the standards, not policing the content.

Chair Plaag explained that the difficult part of the HPC now is balancing being advocates for preserving our Town's history and being a quasi-judicial body.

Mr. Tommy Lee discussed how his experiences in Boone have changed over the last decade and how his work is to advocate for art and support practicing artists in the community.

Ms. Shook told Ms. Bateman that she would coordinate a meeting with Staff and other people to be involved in a group meeting to discuss the said project. Ms. Shook said she would contact Ms. Bateman as soon as the meeting had been coordinated.

Member Watkins pointed out that the Certificate of Appropriateness for Major Work Supplemental Checklist requires the Design Standard References to be cited. He said that he could not find said references in either of the two submitted documents. Chair Plaag noted that he thought these submittals were not the standard, fully complete packages because they are not actual cases yet. He explained that they were only consultations because the applicant was looking for some guidance on how to proceed.

Ms. Shook said that the Staff had drafted the requirements for deadlines. She said, for example, for the February 2022 meeting, the deadline is December 13, 2021.

Ms. Bateman asked if she needed to submit an application to attach the mural to the building and not the masonry or submit an application to be reviewed at the February 2022 HPC meeting. Chair Plaag said he thought these were open questions, pending staff review.

Collette-Woodruff P.C. Sign Consultation

Ms. Candi Woodruff began discussing this agenda item and referred to page 20 of the meeting packet. She explained that she and her business partner, Ms. Jenny Collette, hired Appalachian Sign Company to make their sign because their business is located in Downtown Boone. She explained that she and Ms. Collette have a new CPA firm, and they are anxious to get their permanent signage up before the tax season starts. She said that she and Ms. Collette are long-term residents, having lived in Boone since 2002. She said they picked Howard Street for their business because they wanted to have a presence in the Downtown area.

Chair Plaag reviewed Section 8 of the Historic District Standards. It was his opinion that generally a sign application should not require the COA for Major Work and could be reviewed at the staff level, provided it does not trigger other potential areas of review under the standards.

Chair Plaag pointed out, for example, that the exterior of the building has stucco on it. He explained that when bolts are driven through the stucco, the bolts will likely crack the stucco, especially since the stucco on this building is already cracking. He said this process would damage the current veneer's surface and historical materials on the face of that building. He said there is no way around damaging it when driving bolts through the stucco. He said that when there is potential damage to a historical veneer of a property, the HPC would want to review it. He said that for the approval process, the applicant needs to be prepared to address how they will mitigate any potential damage to a veneer by having the sign attached to the building. He said he did not know if there were other ways to adhere the sign to the building without penetrating the veneer. He said if there is another way, the application could be reviewed under the COA Minor Works process.

Discussion ensued on the repair of the façade of the building. Ms. Woodruff asked about the terms of mitigating the damage. Could she have the stucco refurbished simultaneously as the sign's placement? Chair Plaag explained that the Town of Boone, through the Downtown Boone Development Association has a façade incentive grant

program. He told Ms. Woodruff that she could request the survey description of the property from Staff. He said that since there is already a problem with a veneer element on the building, this is an opportunity to apply for a façade incentive grant (with the assistance from the DBDA) which could be up to a \$5,000.00 match to help pay for the façade renovation. He noted that he was aware that this building had been altered some, and the renovation would have to try to bring it back to its original historic appearance, at least to some degree. He added that this building was originally a one and one-half story warehouse, and the upstairs apartments were built at some later date. He concluded that the way the sign is proposed right now, it would need to go through the COA process.

Ms. Shook explained that the adopted design standards outline what qualifies for minor and major work. She said the major work is referred to the HPC to review the COA process. She said the minor work standards outline temporary signs and do not include permanent signs. She further explained that this was the reason for the consultation. She mentioned that more discussion might be needed about whether a COA process, a Statement of Conformity, or something else would be required for permanent signs. She explained that more discussion might be needed about the damage of the stucco through the installation of the sign, as far as how it triggered the COA process. She continued that we need to figure out an official process and acceptable guidelines for signs in the Downtown. She thought the language needs to be modified to state that a sign that can be permitted under the Statement of Conformity, which is administratively approved by Staff or the COA process. She said that for this specific sign, based on the current language and what Chair Plaag pointed out in the design standards, she agreed that a COA application would be necessary.

Ms. Shook explained that the applicant submitted the sign application in mid-November, and that timeframe makes the applicant subject to the adopted design standards. She said she wanted to make sure we did not delay the applicant any more than we necessarily had to. Therefore, she suggested that consultation occur, so it would be successful if they had to go through the COA process. She explained that since the applicant will have to go through the COA process, it will now be February of 2022 before they can get their sign permit for an application submitted in November.

Discussion ensued on the definition of a temporary sign. Chair Plaag asked the Staff for the definition of a temporary sign. Ms. Turner said a temporary sign is a sign or advertising display constructed on cloth, canvas, fabric, plastic, paper, plywood, or other white material used only temporarily and is not permanently mounted.

Chair Plaag asked Ms. Shook if a vinyl sign or a rigid vinyl sign could be affixed by a mastic (a type of glue) to the face of the building, as opposed to a blade mounted to the front of the building, would be allowed. He asked Ms. Shook if, on the application under the Statement of Conformity, to make it clear that this is a temporary measure until the issue with the veneer has been reviewed. He said could this be a way to get a temporary sign mounted through the administrative process while waiting on the full COA process for the bladed sign. He said this would allow the applicant to say they are open for business without hanging their bladed sign. Ms. Shook agreed that there is an option for a temporary sign. She said many businesses utilize temporary signs before they move in. She said there are specific regulations about how long you can have a temporary sign up. Ms. Turner noted that a temporary sign is good for 30 days. Ms. Shook said this is an issue because it will not cover the length of time it will take to get the COA. Ms. Shook noted there are alternatives, such as signs mounted inside the clerestory windows.

Ms. Shook said that she presented the topic of permit fees to Council at their last meeting. She explained that in this particular case, the cost of permitting for a regular COA is a high percentage of the cost of the sign itself. She said that we thought this might be a concern. She further explained that in the future, people would be better prepared, for example, if the applicant goes to Appalachian Signs for their signs, they will explain to a client that

there is a process taking an extra amount of time. She said there would have to be a proposed change to the design standards. Chair Plaag agreed with Ms. Shook.

In September, Ms. Woodruff explained that she had started the sign process with Appalachian Signs. She said if she had known about the requirements of the Historic District Design Standards, she would have applied for their sign sooner. She said that she did not expect the delays with their sign application submittal. Ms. Shook suggested that since the Town does not regulate signage inside windows that Ms. Woodruff could put a sign up inside their window. She said the sign could be in the window for as long as needed until the permanent sign is installed. Ms. Woodruff said that she had a decal in the window. The surrounding business signs are so prominent that people walk by their business, even with the decal on their window.

Ms. Jenny Collette, a business partner with Ms. Woodruff, explained that they are only the tenants of the building. Ms. Collette asked Chair Plaag what the path of least resistance would be to make sure that they can put up the sign that is already made and paid for. Chair Plaag said that given what is proposed and the likelihood that fixing the sign to the veneer would damage the veneer, the only way to utilize the sign is to go through the COA process. He told Ms. Collette that they would need to be prepared to discuss how to mitigate any likely damage to the façade. He suggested addressing the veneer that is already falling off the building. He said there have already been a couple of tenants in Downtown Boone that have applied for façade incentive grants with permission from the building owners. He suggested informing the building owner about the veneer issue on the building and that it will be addressed soon by applying for a grant. Then Ms. Collette could tell the owner that they would put a certain amount of money toward it. The owner could put a certain amount of money into it since the owner would have to address the issue at some point. Additionally, the applicants could explain that the façade grant could provide up to a \$5,000.00 match through the DBDA to pay for it. He said this might be a way of solving the more significant problem and using the sign.

Chair Plaag said to Ms. Collette that there is a possibility of asking the sign maker to take on the liability of assuring that the historic fabric will not be cracked or damaged in any way. He said this liability statement could be presented as part of the COA case for affixing the sign to the building, but that he had doubts the sign maker would make such a commitment.

Ms. Collette asked if there was an issue with hanging their proposed sign from a balcony window above their offices. Chair Plaag deferred this question to the Staff. He said that might be a conversation outside the boundaries of this meeting where Ms. Collette would talk with the Staff to see if that is an option.

Ms. Turner pointed out that currently, in the B-1 zoning district, only three types of signs are allowed: freestanding, attached, and projecting. She said that what Ms. Collette is asking about does not fit into these categories.

Ms. Woodruff stated that if the temporary sign is up for 30 days from December 15, 2021, to January 15, 2021. It will have to be taken down in prime tax season.

Ms. Bateman suggested putting out a sandwich board. Ms. Shook pointed out that sandwich boards are prohibited in the B-1 zoning district. Ms. Shook encouraged the use of indoor window signage to be used at this time until the permanent sign approval or until the proposed design standards language changes where potentially the applicant would not have to have sign approval.

Chair Plaag added an option that Ms. Collette could explore the possibility of getting a sign that adheres to the surface of the building. He said it might mean paying for a new sign, but that overall process might be a lot cheaper than going through the COA process for the sign that has already been paid for.

Council Liaison Roseman apologized that we could not find these issues before implementing some of these new codes. She said that Ms. Shook presented to Council what they would like for the HPC to figure out what they felt comfortable with, giving Staff the ability to approve. She asked if it was allowed to paint the business's name on the door. Ms. Shook said there are several potential inside solutions. She offered for Ms. Collette and Ms. Woodruff to meet with Staff to go over those solutions. Ms. Woodruff explained that she wished that she had been more involved with the vendor in terms of timing because the \$2,500 investment into the sign for a small business is quite costly.

Member Watkins said that generally speaking, it is common to drill into a mortar joint to affix signage, even on historic buildings. He said this occurs frequently in Charleston, so it might be useful to check with the Charleston Board of Architectural Review, to see what they recommend for this type of work. He said he felt almost certain that a sign could go into those mortar joints with lead anchors with the potential for expansion and contraction. He said this would have a very adverse effect on the mortar joints of the block. Chair Plaag said that in the mounted mural, generally speaking, it is acceptable to drill into the mortar joint to affix signage, even on historic buildings. Chair Plaag said that in the case of this sign, the problem is that they do not know where the mortar joints are because of the stucco veneer. Additionally, it was questioned if the stucco constitutes a historical material in its own right and if damaging it will create a problem from a historic preservationist standpoint.

Chair Plaag explained what the HPC would need to do with these two cases.

Chair Plaag explained to Ms. Collette and Ms. Woodruff that the hearing for the COA process is similar to a court case. It is their job, as an applicant, to present what they are proposing to do and present their evidence that they can do it without causing lasting damage to this building. He further explained that the HPC then considers the evidence and other evidence the community might want to evaluate the COA application. He said that the HPC would make findings of fact and that roster of facts will be addressed at the hearing.

Ms. Shook asked Ms. Turner to reach out to Ms. Collette and Ms. Woodruff to schedule a meeting to review everything discussed in detail.

Cultural Resources Loom Discussion

Mr. Mark Freed, Director of Cultural Resources, said that Council had directed him to the HPC for discussion about a historic loom in the Town's possession before the Council decides on a possible disposition of the loom. Ms. Shook said that the Council wanted to know if the HPC had any knowledge of the loom having local historical significance, especially since the loom had been at the Appalachian Cultural Museum. He showed photos of the loom. He said that Ms. Pilar Fotta, the former Cultural Resources Director acquired the loom. He said it came from Appalachian State University, and it was once displayed in the Appalachian Cultural Museum. He said his understanding was that Ms. Jane Campbell, a local loom expert, assembled and disassembled the loom to ensure all parts were there. He said the loom is much too large to display at the Jones House. He said the Town does not have a proper place to display it. He said it was at the Blowing Rock Art and History Museum (BRAHM) for a short time. He mentioned a note on the loom stating that it might be a Lucy Morgan loom. He said the loom has been sitting in pieces in the attic of the Jones House since it came back from BRAHM. He noted that Ms. Campbell had contacted him to ask if the Town still had the loom and might be interested in placing the loom where it could be used. He said he had found Ms. Janelle West, a Watauga High School instructor. She is interested in teaching weaving, and she is willing to take it on. He explained the value of having some students working the functioning loom in our community. He said the high school was ready to take it but not to take the loom on a loan basis because of the possibility of something happening to it. He said that Ms. Allison Meade, Town Attorney, informed him that it is all right to give the loom to the high school since they are another government entity. He said the

Council expressed an interest in having the option for getting the loom back if it was given to the high school. Additionally, he explained Council's interest in asking the HPC if they thought it was a good idea to give the loom to the high school or for the Town to hold on to it. He said the reason Council was interested in keeping the loom would be for future opportunities to display it. He said the Rivers House was mentioned as a future location to display the loom. He said knowing the interior of the River House and the potential for renovation there, he did not envision a likely space for the large loom to be displayed there. Member Watkins asked if the loom had any accession mark on the labels. He said he had a vague memory of a standard loom developed for Penland School by a Scandinavian woman. Member Watkins said that loom could have been a Lucy Morgan loom, but he was unsure.

Mr. Freed noted that Penland was written on one of the notes in the loom display. Member Bond stated that she was familiar with looms, and they are large, bulky, and cause a constant problem while using them. Member Watkins asked Mr. Freed to ask Ms. Campbell to confirm if the loom is a Penland. Mr. Freed noted that Ms. Campbell said she would re-assemble the loom if needed. Member Watkins explained that if it is a Penland loom, it would mean that it is designed to be easily set up and used as a teaching device for weaving.

Council Liaison Roseman confirmed that the Council wanted to know if the loom had any historical significance and if the HPC thought it was a good idea to use it in our local school system. She said that she felt that giving the loom to the high school was a wonderful gesture, especially now that it seems to be a Penland loom. It can be used for educational purposes. She said the Council wanted to be sure that we were not giving away a piece of our history. She said that it would be good if the high school stopped using the loom, that the Town could be first to be able to take it back.

Chair Plaag said he is not a loom expert but that Digital Watauga has images of looms in operation. He said there was a loom in operation at a building on South Depot Street until they ended their operations, as well as a loom at Watauga Handicrafts on Hardin Street. He said based on visual evidence of the photos that Mr. Freed presented makes it obvious that the possible Penland loom is not one of those looms from this operation. He suggested that since Member Watkins has requested more information about the loom, the HPC will wait until their January 2022 meeting to see if additional information can be found. Chair Plaag said maybe at that point the HPC can make a more official recommendation on it one way or the other to Council.

Vice-Chair Bond supported the idea of the loom being taken to the high school and being used for educational purposes. She said that if we find out that the loom has historical significance, it would be wonderful for those students to connect with that craft. Chair Plaag said, in principle, he agreed with Vice-Chair Bond that he would rather see the loom being used, particularly if it's designed to be a teaching loom. Member Willis agreed with Chair Plaag and Vice-Chair Bond.

Member Watkins asked Mr. Freed to ask Ms. Campbell if she knew Ms. Anne Ernberg. The latter was the weaving expert at Berea during the craft revival period. Member Watkins said that he thought that this individual was the loom designer.

Chair Plaag told Mr. Freed that he would send him the loom images from Digital Watauga just in case he needs them to present to Council.

Chair Plaag called for a four-minute recess at 8:18 p.m. He reconvened the meeting at 8:22 p.m.

HPC Quasi-Judicial Rules of Procedure Update

Ms. Jessica Mitchell, Long-Range/Special Projects Planner, announced that the HPC Rules of Procedure are still being drafted. She said this topic had been moved to the January 2022 meeting pending further edits and collaboration with Staff and Ms. Meade. Ms. Mitchell said that she would hopefully have an update at that time. Chair Plaag asked Ms. Shook if February of 2022 would be the earliest that the HPC would have its first case. Ms. Shook said yes.

CLG Update

Ms. Mitchell asked if there were any questions regarding the draft Certified Local Government (CLG) application item regarding HPC activities. This item was sent to the HPC members via email prior to the meeting. She noted that this is an ongoing project by Staff until late spring of 2022. Chair Plaag asked for clarification on an item listed, specifically the Boone Cemeteries item. He also requested clarification on what descriptions are required for this CLG item and how extensive the past items list should be. Ms. Mitchell stated that she would confirm these items with the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office.

Chair Plaag questioned the additional CLG application item of member resumes and if there would be adequate time to complete the form. Ms. Mitchell stated that she had a form available and would wait until the new Town Council members are seated, and the liaisons are assigned to the HPC.

Cemetery Mapping Project

Chair Plaag said that Dr. Kristen Baldwin-Deathridge, History Professor at Appalachian State University, emailed him and stated that her class had surveyed the Edmisten Cemetery, located off State Farm Road. She said she would send that survey material to the Staff and Chair Plaag.

Chair Plaag asked about the HPC Cemetery Mapping Project "press release." Ms. Mitchell said that the "press release" has been made public, and she has not received information as far as any cemetery information requests. She said she had received questions but no specific data on said topic. Ms. Shook confirmed that the Town publishes all its press releases to a certain list of news organizations, and those organizations choose to publish or not publish them. Ms. Shook pointed out that the "press release" is located in the press release section of the Town website under the Planning and Inspections webpage, then under the "News Flash" section of the Town website. Ms. Shook said we would try to have the press release on the HPC website when it goes live.

Chair Plaag asked Ms. Mitchell about the questions she had received on the said topic. Ms. Mitchell said the questions we're asking about the Town's position on the Mount Lawn Cemetery and its condition. She said that after talking with Ms. Shook and Ms. Turner, she contacted the individual and told them she would pass their concern along to the HPC. Ms. Mitchell gave the individual information based on what had been previously discussed. Chair Plaag pointed out that the Council had requested that the HPC report the known cemeteries by the end of this year. He noted that he did not think that the report was going to happen by the end of the year. He said the HPC would be able to report to Council on it early in the new year.

Chair Plaag expressed concern about responding directly to public feedback like what Ms. Mitchell had just described. He suggested asking Council for direction on how they would like the HPC to address the said topic. He said that in the coming year, the HPC would have some direction from Council on some of the cemeteries, to make a recommendation about one of several of interpretation, acquisition, and designation of those various cemeteries. He said since the "press release" has been made public fairly recently, he suggested giving it more time in the public. He suggested checking back in January 2022 to see where we are on said topic.

Cemetery Designation/Interpretation Guidelines

Chair Plaag said he would be presenting the proposed Cemetery Designation/Interpretation Guidelines for Council's approval and direction at their December 8, 2021, Special Council Meeting. He said he would also present to Council an update on the Hayes, Bryan, Greene Cemetery. He said he would ask the Council specifically for direction on whether they want the HPC to make a recommendation on either or both of the designation and acquisition of the said cemetery. He pointed out that the new HPC Member Willis may want to have the knowledge of these standards for the January 2022 discussion on said topic. Ms. Mitchell said she would provide Member Willis with a copy of the standards.

Hayes, Bryan, Greene Cemetery Historical Marker

Chair Plaag said that he had drafted a historical marker report included in this meeting's packet. He said that he included the standard required information in the report and prepared a historical sketch about the cemetery. He said he focused on a description of the cemetery and the various grave markers that are visible in the cemetery. He thanked Ms. Turner and Ms. Mitchell for securing the photographs. He said in the report that there is a brief write-up on each of the markers, including information about each of the individuals who are known to be buried there.

Discussion ensued on the recommendations for the Hayes, Bryan, Greene Cemetery. Chair Plaag asked the HPC if they would be inclined to recommend to Council that they invest funds in a marker for interpreting this monument and placing it on King Street. He also asked the HPC if they were ready to forward the historical marker report to Council for their approval.

Motion and Vote:

Member Watkins made a motion, seconded by Member Willis to forward the Hayes, Bryan, Greene Cemetery historical marker report to Council for their consideration.

Vote: Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Discussion ensued on the location of the historical marker. Chair Plaag explained that he is recommending one location that is publicly owned property by Watauga County. He said he thought the county might be open to potentially placing the marker near Straight Street. He suggested not placing the marker at the cemetery because the road to the cemetery is narrow, and it would only serve to draw traffic into that neighborhood. He said that he thought that the best way to acknowledge the cemetery, in terms of a historical marker, is to place the marker where it will be easily seen. He asked Ms. Shook if the Staff anticipated any issues with the location near Straight Street. Ms. Shook said there would need to be some coordination with the county for its placement if they own it or the North Carolina Department of Transportation if it is in their right of way. He said he is open to discussion on other locations for said marker. It was suggested to place it near the Watauga County Agricultural Center or at the corner of Queen and Water Street. It was the consensus of the HPC to present both locations to Council and let them decide the location for the historical marker. He said he would add this discussion of the historical marker locations to the historical marker report.

Motion and Vote:

Member Watkins made a motion, seconded by Member Willis to ask Council if they want to expend town funds to install a marker at one of the two locations. Discussed locations include near Straight Street off of King Street, or at the corner of Queen Street and Water Street.

Vote: Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Chair Plaag said that he would inform the Council at their December 8, 2021 meeting that the Hayes, Bryan, Greene Cemetery case will be on their January 2022 Council agenda for their consideration.

Council Store Historical Marker

Chair Plaag explained that he had not completed the historical marker report, but he would have it completed for the HPC to review at their January 2022 meeting.

Town Streets Project

Chair Plaag explained that he had completed the Appalachian Street and Junaluska Road reports. He noted that he had sent these reports to the HPC prior to the meeting. He asked Ms. Shook if the HPC could approve the reports or did they need to go to Council for approval. Ms. Shook said that before the reports are published, they should at least be presented to the Town Manager for his review. Chair Plaag said he thought the HPC could vote to approve these two reports. He said he would work with the Staff this week to get them ready to publish on the Town's website. Ms. Shook agreed with Chair Plaag working with Ms. Mitchell on getting the said reports on the town website.

Motion and Vote:

Member Watkins made a motion, seconded by Member Willis to approve the completed Town Street reports for Appalachian Street and Junaluska Road.

Vote: Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Renaming/Designation of Town Streets

Chair Plaag discussed the proposed honorary designation of Rivers Street by adding a sign. Member Watkins suggested that this topic be placed on this HPC agenda for discussion but not for action. Member Watkins talked about the history of Chancellor John Thomas and his connection to Appalachian State University. Member Watkins said, when he heard about the said designation, it got his attention not because Chancellor Thomas was involved but the tying in of his name with Rivers Street. Member Watkins pointed out that, from a preservation standpoint, commemorating with a name associated with the University gives the University the honor when the University has proven not to support preservation. Council Liaison Roseman thanked Member Watkins for sharing his synopsis of said topic.

Watauga County Jail Project

Chair Plaag explained that he is working on this local landmark report and hoped to have it completed for the HPC to review at their January 2022 meeting.

Historic District Sign Permitting Discussion

Chair Plaag began the discussion by explaining that the HPC will review certain projects because they will trigger various things that arise in major works. He said that Ms. Shook wanted the HPC to address signage, specifically how the only type of signage is temporary signage for the administrative process. He stated that the HPC only needs to be focused on evaluating signs within the historic district to the extent that the installation of a sign that has the potential to damage the historic fabric of a contributing building. He explained that a sign in the historic district should use a material that is appropriate to the historical period and does not have the potential to destroy the historic fabric. Most sign applications are something that the Staff could work on, thus saving the applicant the expense of a COA application process and saving the HPC time. Ms. Shook agreed and mentioned how the COA process includes the price of the application fee and necessary attorney fees. Ms. Shook said that in this

case, the business is incorporated or are LLCs and will have the expense of having an attorney present at the COA hearing, the cost of the application fee, the cost of advertising, and the cost of the sign. Ms. Shook said that she thought the Council was hoping that the Staff and HPC could (1) come up with a threshold of what needed to be reviewed by the HPC for a COA, and (2) what could be reviewed under the Statement of Conformity that would utilize materials that are historical to the district.

Motion and Vote:

Chair Plaag made a motion, seconded by Member Watkins, to add to the list of minor works, for works that can go under the Statement of Conformity process, the addition of permanent signs that use materials that are appropriate to the historic district and do not have the potential to harm, damage, or destroy the historic fabric of a contributing building within the district.

Vote: Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Ms. Shook asked if Staff would use the architectural survey to determine which buildings are contributing buildings or not contributing buildings within the district. She said we would also need to look at the attached signs and assess the historical materials. Ms. Shook asked Ms. Turner if she was clear on what historical materials were, and Ms. Turner said yes. Additionally, Ms. Turner said it might help to define historical materials better. Chair Plaag said that historical materials would be any materials utilized in signs during the period of significance for the district, for example, the discussed building, from 1918 to 1964 or 1965. He said the materials for the mid-1960s would include some types of vinyl or plastic that were used, particularly in interior lighted signs. He mentioned that adding some language such as a proposed sign is sympathetic to and compatible with the historic fabric of the building.

Chair Plaag suggested a change to the language in the design standards for the district to give Staff guidance on making decisions on whether a case would require a COA or a Statement of Conformity.

Council Liaison Roseman referred to the Collette-Woodruff P.C. Sign Consultation agenda item. She said the side of the building seems to be brickwork and may not be covered in stucco. She asked if an L-shaped bracket was used to hold the sign out, could that material be allowed. Chair Plaag said he thought the problem with the L-shaped bracket might be other regulations in the standards that mention a sign cannot wrap the building. It cannot go beyond a façade. He said he does not want to propose a solution to the standards that might trigger something else as a bar. He said the upper story on this building looks like they added either a brick or a brick tile above the concrete block to complete the second story addition.

Member Watkins said the upper window treatments look contemporary, and he asked how recently they were added. Chair Plaag said he would have to look that information up. Chair Plaag also asked the Staff on the consultations to include an excerpt on the building from the survey report in the future. He said this information is helpful because in most cases it includes when specific changes were made to the building.

Other Discussion

Chair Plaag pointed out to Ms. Shook on the Town website that the historical population statistics of the Town were unsourced, and the early 20th century numbers do not look correct. He asked Ms. Shook if this could be researched and updated. Ms. Shook said she would pass his information along to Town Hall and ask them to check into it.

Chair Plaag said, with permission from the board members and Staff, he would work with the board secretary on the agenda items for the January 2022 meeting.

Ms. Shook pointed out that the Staff is moving the HPC website information to the new Town of Boone website. She noted that this is an ongoing task among Staff.

Adjournment

Member Watkins made a motion, seconded by Member Willis to adjourn the meeting at 9:31 p.m.

Vote: Aye - All
Nay – None
The motion passed.

Eric Plaag, Chair

Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary