TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 8, 2020
3:00 PM

Historic Preservation Commission Members in Attendance:
Vice-Chairperson Phoebe Pollitt, Bettie Bond and Chuck Watkins

Council Liaisons: Rennie Brantz and Loretta Clawson

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

Others Present:
Mark Freed-Director of Cultural Resources

Call to Order
Vice-Chairperson Pollitt called the meeting of the Boone Historic Preservation Commission, held via WebEx, a video conferencing software to order on Tuesday, December 8, 2020 at 3:01 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda
Member Bond made a motion, seconded by Member Watkins to adopt the agenda as amended by tabling the approval of the meeting minutes to the next meeting. The Historic Preservation Commission members at this meeting agreed on the tabling of the said meeting minutes.

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

Approval of Minutes
Vice-Chairperson Pollitt, Member Bond and Member Watkins all agreed to table the following meeting minutes to the next meeting: September 30, 2020 Council, Community Appearance Commission, October 27, 2020 Council, Community Appearance Commission and the November 10, 2020 Historic Preservation Commission meeting minutes.

Public Comment
Vice-Chairperson Pollitt welcomed Mr. Mark Freed, Town of Boone Director of the Cultural Resources Department to the HPC meeting. Mr. Freed explained that he had been asked by Mr. John Ward the Town Manager to begin forming a list of contacts for planning meetings for the Town of Boone Sesquicentennial Celebration. He said the official planning meetings would begin early in 2021 for the said celebration. He noted that these planning meetings will be held virtually via WebEx, a video conferencing software. He asked the HPC members if they would

like to be a part of these planning meetings. Vice-Chairperson Pollitt and Member Bond said that they would like to be included in the said meetings. Mr. Freed said he would give updates to the HPC on the progress of the planning meetings as it becomes available.

Ms. Christy Turner, Senior Planner reminded the HPC that if they have three members or more meeting in each planning meeting, the meeting will have to be advertised as a HPC meeting.

Mr. Freed left this virtual meeting at approximately 3:06 p.m.

Junaluska Marker

Ms. Turner explained that she had received an email from Chairperson Plaag who had been in communication with Ms. Roberta Jackson, a member of the Junaluska Heritage Association, regarding the dates to install the marker. In the said email, Ms. Jackson said that the JHA preferred to have the marker installed on June 19, 2021 and if the June date is not approved that any date in February for Black History month would work for the JHA for the installation of the marker.

Motion and Vote:

Member Bond made a motion, seconded by Member Watkins that upon a recommendation from the Junaluska Heritage Association that the Junaluska marker be installed on Saturday, June 19, 2020 as opposed to February (Black History Month) because of the cold weather in February.

Vote:

Aye – All
Nay – None
The motion passed.

Turner House

There was no update for this agenda item.

Zoning & Historic District Processes

Ms. Shook said at the last joint meeting with the Council, Historic Preservation Commission and the Community Appearance Commission there was an agreement with CAC Chairperson Brian Williams and the HPC Chairperson Eric Plaag to meet with Staff to talk about some issues that might need further discussion. She said that the agenda items that were discussed at this meeting were boundaries, content, what falls under the purview of the Historic District regulations, what falls under the purview of the underlying zoning district and they discussed a proposal for the next steps in the process.

Ms. Shook said in the discussion on the boundary, they agreed that the historic district boundaries would stay the same. She said there were no proposed changes to the historic district.

Ms. Shook said there were some proposed changes made to the underlying zoning district. She said in the courthouse area, it was agreed that the Nathan's Walk Apartments will remain in the B1 Downtown Interface Area. She said the courthouse area would move into the B1 Downtown Historic Core.

Ms. Shook said there were four or five parcels along King Street that are adjacent to the courthouse that were moved from the B1 Downtown Interface Area into the B1 Downtown Core.

Ms. Shook said on the east side of Town the Turchin Center and the First Baptist Church property as well as the Wesley Foundation property were recommended to be moved from the B1 Downtown Interface into the B1 Downtown Core to make those boundaries consistent with one another. Ms. Shook said that Council approved these proposed changes.

Ms. Shook said there were several proposed changes made to the content. She said the biggest change was to some of the unacceptable building materials on some structures.

Ms. Shook said there was discussion on the doors and there were a couple of doors that were in the CAC Design Guidelines that were not acceptable in the Historic District Guidelines. She said some further discussion might be needed by the HPC and the outcome of that discussion may need to be included in the final version.

Ms. Shook said there was discussion on the awning and canopy sections. Those proposed changes were also approved by Council. She said that the Staff will be presenting these proposed changes in the next steps of the process.

Ms. Shook noted that she would send out to the HPC the memo that she was reading from so everyone can read what she is referring to.

Ms. Shook said there was discussion on the authority or which set of guidelines trump the other set of guidelines. She said the applicant has to meet all of the requirements of the UDO except where it conflicts with the local Historic District regulations. She said in the case of this type of conflict the local Historic District regulations will supersede anything the zoning ordinance may require.

Ms. Shook talked about the next steps in the process. She said that currently Staff is putting together digital packages of the Arc GIS Story Map and the Story Map Journal. She explained that the story map is a digital online map that a person will be able to click on property by property through the whole entire project boundary. She said the project boundary includes not only the local Historic District but the entire Downtown area that is going to be rezoned to Downtown zoning districts. She said this part of the process will be a parcel by parcel evaluation of each property. She said the evaluation will tell you what the current zoning is and what the proposed zoning is and whether or not you are included in the local Historic District.

Ms. Shook explained that the story map journal is basically the story which is the Staff's opportunity to put a narrative that presents a positive side to these projects. She said the narrative would include the benefits of the proposed changes to the community and to the property owner of the proposed changes

Ms. Shook said as the Staff goes through the narrative on the left hand side of the screen, there can be links for interviews with people. She said that HPC Chairperson Plaag had talked about embedding links that contain interviews from property owners who have been through this type of process before and who can speak to the benefits of being in an historic district. She said there are other links that can be embedded in the maps from the State Historic Preservation Commission (SHPO). She said the story journal will also tell the other proposed changes for the B1 Downtown Core and the B1 Downton Interface. She said as you scroll down the pages on the left and click on the links the map on the right side of the screen will change. She noted that the story drives the moving of the map. She said that during this time of Covid-19, the online story map and story journal are a good way to get the information out to the public for their review.

Ms. Shook said the Staff will present these proposed changes to Council in January of 2021.

Ms. Shook said the Council approved for the Staff to give a presentation at the Planning Retreat. She said at the Council's December 2020 meeting, they will set the date for the Planning Retreat.

Ms. Shook said in January, 2021, the Staff will present the digital package of the Arch GIS work along with a hard copy book indexed for each property.

Ms. Shook said in early February 2021, a joint-meeting will be scheduled with the Council, CAC, HPC and the Planning Commission. She said that the Planning Commission is tasked with making the final recommendation to Council.

Ms. Shook said that in late February 2021, the Planning Commission can give initial comments back to the Planning Staff at their regular scheduled meeting. She said that the Planning Staff will invite the committee chairpersons and vice-chairpersons to attend this Planning Commission meeting.

Ms. Shook said that in March 2021, this is the timeframe to begin having the public input meetings. She said around February 2021, it will be decided how these meetings will occur whether they be in person or online.

In late March 2021, the Council, Community Appearance Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, and the Planning Commission will meet to go over all public input that has been received.

In early April 2021, the actual public hearings will begin. And hopefully, in April 2021 Council will vote on both work projects.

Ms. Shook said that she hopes by the middle of April 2021 that we will have some additional protections in place for the Downtown area because of the work of the HPC on the local Downtown Historic District and the proposed changes to the underlying zoning district.

Council Liaison Brantz asked if the said meetings would be held virtually or in person. Ms. Shook said at this time, she anticipated they would be held virtually via WebEx.

Member Watkins asked if the property maps would be updated. Ms. Shook said she would send out a packet that was sent to Council that has the updated maps with the properties that have been added or changed.

Discussion ensued on rooftops additions. Ms. Shook said that the Planning Staff is asking for the HPC's feedback that will be presented to the other groups in case there is further discussion on said topic. Ms. Shook said that currently in the ordinance, rooftop additions are exempt from building height, there are some regulations that help to guide their placement; but it is not very restrictive. Ms. Shook said that Chairperson Plaag had brought this topic up at the meeting with the CAC Chairperson Williams and Planning Staff. She said the Planning Staff forwarded this topic to Council and they agreed that additional discussion should occur to make sure that this topic is being handled correctly, especially, in the B1 Downtown Core and the Local Historic District.

Ms. Turner explained that Chairperson Plaag had sent out an email from the ncpres@listserve.unc.edu for Historic Preservation (permanently on file). She said that Chairperson Plaag got a response dated December 7, 2020 from Ms. Jennifer Cathey who is the Restoration Specialist from the State Historic Preservation Office for the NCDNCR Western Office, Office of Archives and History, Division of Historical Resources in Asheville, North Carolina. Ms. Turner read aloud the email from Ms. Cathey. In her email, Ms. Cathey referred to the rooftop additions as rooftop bars. Ms. Cathey noted that she often draws upon the guidance found under the topic of Additions in NPS' online index: https://www.nps.gov/how-to-preserve/by-topic.htm. Ms. Cathey also stated in her email that the SOI Standards are referenced, with case studies.

Ms. Turner explained that she had found information on rooftop additions from the Salisbury, North Carolina Historic District Design Standards that state as follows (permanently on file):

5.5.1 Locate decks and terraces as inconspicuously as possible, on the rear or least defining elevation of the historic buildings.
5.5.2 Construct decks and terraces so there is the least possible loss of historic fabric also ensure that character defining features of the historic building are not obscured, damaged or destroyed.
5.5.3 Significant historic architectural features on historic structures, such as a porch, should not be removed to construct a deck.
5.5.4 Screen decks and terraces from public view with appropriate landscaping.
5.5.5 For rooftop decks and terraces use and design that steps back activities such as

umbrellas and tables so they are not seen from the sidewalk or street.

5.5.6 If a new deck is to be constructed its design should be compatible with materials and detail with the main building.

5.5.7 If possible, when adding a rear deck to a historic structure should be designed so it can be removed in the future, without any loss to the historic fabric of the existing building.

5.5.8 For residential decks generally align the height of the deck with the floor level of the historic building. If applicable, install compatible skirt boards and, where appropriate, lattice panels, screen deck framing.

5.5.9 Tt is not appropriate to use unfinished lumber or decking for the finished appearance of the deck. Paint or stain decks in colors compatible with the historic building.

Member Watkins pointed out that over the last few years that the roof top bars have been popping up in the Historic District in Charleston, South Carolina. He said it would be interesting to see what their requirements are.

Ms. Shook said that the Planning Staff can review the Salisbury standards and do some research in the Charleston, South Carolina area to find some possible versions of possible regulations on these particular structures. Ms. Shook said if the HPC is alright with the Planning Staff taking this direction, the Planning Staff could present their research at the January 2021 HPC meeting.

Council Liaison Brantz noted that he is interested in potential safety issues. Ms. Shook said that the building code is really restrictive on rooftop additions that also includes the engineering and design of them.

Member Bond noted that because of the topography in Downtown Boone you can see the Horton Hotel rooftop bar from the First Baptist Church and from the Jones House Cultural Center.

Ms. Shook said that there is concern in the Downtown Community regarding additional regulation that would completely restrict rooftop bars. She noted that many merchants are very interested in using rooftop bars as an economic tool for their business. She said that she hopes that a compromise can be found that allows installation that follows the requirements that have to be met for the rooftop bars. She said we will find out if there is a compromise as it is discussed.

Mr. Brian Johnson, Urban Design Specialist commented on behalf of Member Watkins comments and noted that the Planning Staff could research the rooftop bars in the City of Asheville because these type of bars are very popular there. The HPC agreed for the Planning Staff to do this additional research.

Town Streets

Vice-Chairperson Pollitt noted that the HPC has already received their street names that they are to research and the HPC understood that they are to be prepared to present their research at the January 2021 HPC meeting.

Town Website

Ms. Shook informed the HPC that she and Chairperson Plaag and Ms. Turner met virtually a few weeks ago and discussed the Town website for about two hours regarding specifically, the Historic Preservation Commission webpage. Ms. Shook said they discussed some basic changes that they will need to make to the webpage. Ms. Shook said it will take longer to make some of the fundamental changes than just creating the webpage; but they are working on it. Ms. Shook said that Chairperson Plaag has agreed to work on the webpage because he is familiar with the Town system. Ms. Shook said that Chairperson Plaag said he would share his work on the webpage with her as soon as he is able to do so. Ms. Shook said that in January or February of 2021, the Planning Staff and Chairperson Plaag may have a better update on the Town of Boone HPC webpage.

Informal Discussion/Other Matters

Vice-Chairperson Pollitt mentioned that there are two regular member positions open and one Appalachian State University student position is open on the HPC roster. She confirmed that we can encourage the public to apply for these open positions. Ms. Shook agreed as long as the applicant is a Town resident. Ms. Shook also noted that it is preferred that the applicant have experience in architecture; but if they do not have this type of experience they may apply anyway and the Council will review their application.

Member Watkins noted that the house and the barn have been torn down beside the Watauga Medical Center located on Deerfield Road.

Vice-Chairperson Pollitt suggested the following agenda items for the next meeting: Junaluska Marker, Turner House, Cemetery Deeds Research, Town Streets and Town Website.

Adjournment

Member Bond made a motion, seconded by Member Watkins to adjourn the meeting at 3:47 p.m.

Vote:

Aye – All
Nay – None
The motion passed.

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Phoebe Pollitt, Vice-Chairperson **Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary**