

**TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 10, 2019
3:00 PM**

Historic Preservation Commission Members in Attendance: Chairperson Eric Plaag, Bettie Bond, Teresa Pearman, Chuck Watkins, Loretta Clawson and Rennie Brantz

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

Others Present: David Spiceland from Appalachian State University

Call to Order

Chairperson Eric Plaag called the meeting of the Boone Historic Preservation Commission, held in the Planning & Inspections upstairs conference room located at 680 West King Street, to order at 3:05 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

Chairperson Plaag noted that he would like to amend the agenda to add an update on the Appalachian Theatre and the Turner Law Office/Hardin House.

Member Brantz made a motion, seconded by Member Clawson to adopt the agenda as amended.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

Chairperson Plaag asked for a clarification to be made to the October 15, 2019 meeting minutes on page four in the sixth paragraph and to correct three typos and change the name of Ms. Sue Keefe to Dr. Sue Keefe.

Member Clawson made a motion, seconded by Member Pearman to approve the October 15, 2019 meeting minutes as amended.

Vote:

Aye - (Bond, Brantz, Clawson, Pearman, Plaag)

Nay - None

Abstention - (Watkins)

The motion passed.

Discussion ensued concerning voting on meeting minutes. Chairperson Plaag explained his understanding of Roberts Rules on this topic. Chairperson Plaag said he would prefer until told otherwise by Council or another procedural process to have the Commission Member be an abstention, if they were not at the meeting when meeting minutes are being considered for approval. The Historic Preservation Commission members agreed with Chairperson Plaag on this topic.

Member Brantz made a motion, seconded by Member Pearman to approve the November 12, 2019 meeting minutes as amended with the correction of one typo on page three in the third paragraph.

Vote:

Aye – (Bond, Brantz, Pearman, Plaag, Watkins)

Nay – None

Abstention – (Clawson)

The motion passed.

Appalachian Theatre

Chairperson Plaag told the HPC members at a public hearing held on November 25, 2019, a text amendment case was heard that would essentially allow any theatre, not just the Appalachian Theater to hold college and university classes, if the theater was located in the B1 zoning district, as long as only one theater was having classes at any given time. He noted that as part of the discussion of said case, it was revealed that the University has within the past year been using the former HowSpace, a current workspace on Howard Street to teach classes. He noted having classes in said space is a violation of the Unified Development Ordinance that was explicitly changed for them to do community enterprise in that space. He also noted that the University has withdrawn its request from consideration by the Town which was a Town initiated text amendment. Ms. Christy Turner, Senior Planner confirmed that the Town has withdrawn the case as a result of the University's action on it. Chairperson Plaag confirmed that at this time classes are not allowed to be held in the theatre.

Member Brantz asked if there was any indication of further discussion on said topic. Chairperson Plaag said in his opinion, it is in the interest of both parties to try to restructure what was in the original agreement.

Member Clawson noted that in the Downtown Boone Development Association meeting that she attended, a representative of the University said there are some things in the agreement that the theatre may decide to use a portion of the theatre for the classes.

Chairperson Plaag talked about the possibility of the two parties working out more details for the contract.

Member Bond said she felt like six-months may go by before this topic may be discussed again because of possible frustration and disappointment for both parties on the outcome of the

discussion of this case. She also mentioned the commitments the University has made to the theatre which have not been honored. She said she felt that the cooling off period will produce a better arrangement of the use of the space.

Chairperson Plaag clarified that the agreement exists and he feels that it needs to be re-negotiated. He stated that he felt both sides are not in agreement on the interpretation of the contract and where things stand. The theatre and the university are waiting on a resolution of the contract disagreement.

Member Pearman asked why the University wants to use the Appalachian Theater, when they have three theatres on campus. Chairperson Plaag explained that he asked the University why they let two of their theatres sit empty. He said that one response that was given from the University representatives regarding the Rosen Theater was that they need to protect the organ.

Chairperson Plaag pointed out that because the Appalachian Theatre has the opera style design, it is ideal for opera performances in a way that none of the other theatres have. He also noted that he does not know why the University wants to use the theater for classroom space.

Turner Law Office/Hardin House

Chairperson Plaag explained that he had learned on November 25, 2019 at the public hearing that the County had applied for a demolition permit for the Hardin House. He said that he had tried to contact Mr. John Turner at the Hardin House to talk to him on behalf of Digital Watauga regarding taking photos of the interior of the building to record the interior architectural design. Mr. Turner emailed Chairperson Plaag and told him that the lease runs through the end of May 2020 and he would figure out a time for the photos to be taken for Digital Watauga. Ms. Turner informed the HPC members that the demolition permit was recently issued and it is good for six months.

Chairperson Plaag further explained that previous discussions had included the creation of a parking deck at the south end of Burrell Street. He explained that the property owner of this location is not interested in selling the property so the idea of a parking deck is not going to happen there.

Member Bond said that discussions are still happening about possibly building a parking deck in the back lot of the Watauga County Library. She asked Chairperson Plaag, if he thought that the County might give them more time on the demolition of the Hardin House, if this proposed parking deck was on the table for discussion. Chairperson Plaag explained that Member Bond has invited about eight people from the Town and County to a meeting on January 27, 2019 to discuss the possible expansion of the Watauga library. She clarified that this is a group she is working with and not members of a Town body participating in this meeting.

Member Bond asked if the Hardin House can be moved. Chairperson Plaag said generally speaking that moving the house would destroy the historical integrity of the building. He said it

could potentially be moved, but he feels there are better solutions. He noted by the County receiving the demolition permit, it evades the Certificate of Appropriateness process and the demolition delay that would come once the district is designated.

Historic Design Guidelines

Chairperson Plaag began discussion on the draft guidelines. He said that he retitled the Guidelines on page one, to the *Downtown Boone Local Historic District Design Guidelines and Handbook* (permanently on file). He also noted December 2019 as the date of the draft on page one. He also updated the names associated with the creation of the draft guidelines by removing Andy Ball and adding Annie McDonald, Paul Fuller, Nicole Holladay, Carson Hamilton and a person from Hendersonville that he will need research to locate their name.

Chairperson Plaag noted that on page four under Historic Preservation in Boone, he added the second sentence in the first paragraph, "The Town Council adopted revised Rules of Procedure for the Commission as well as Interim Design Guidelines applicable to all historically designated properties within the Town limits on January 21, 2016." He noted the following changes: on page six he updated the link to the tax credit page to the State, changed the text "historic district designation" to "local historic district", under the Purpose and Applicability of the Guidelines he re-wrote the second paragraph, he revised the fourth paragraph (not the list), under Legal Overview of Historic Preservation Legislation in the second paragraph he updated the link, under the Façade Incentive Grant Program, he removed the old photo of Town Hall (the old Farmers Ski Shop) and replaced it with two photos of the Appalachian Theatre He said he will insert the material on the Municipal Service District into this section regarding properties only in the MSD, under Historical Influences on Boone's Architecture. He removed the text of the overview and added most of the opening page of the survey report. He added, condensed information in "The Architecture of Downtown Boone", he showed the boundary location and added Water Street/Burrell Street, under Why Preservation Matters he added the fifth paragraph. He removed the Queen Anne Style (late 1800's to early 1900s) and Colonial Revival Style (1880-1955) and other sections like these because most of it was describing architecture outside of the district. He removed the Potential Historic Districts in Boone because the draft document is focused on one district.

Chairperson Plaag began discussion on Commission Procedures. He asked Ms. Turner for the Planning Staff to review: on page 19, Organization of the Town of Boone Historic Preservation Commission section, he noted that one thing that was not discussed was the issue of the five members versus seven members and removed the sentence "its extraterritorial planning jurisdiction".

Chairperson Plaag explained that the Planning Staff had revised the section on the Design Review Process.

Chairperson Plaag suggested the following changes to the Design Review Process section: in the second sentence in the first paragraph change the text to "The design review process for changes in the District requires an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA), he

noted that the Planning Staff had removed some of the text regarding the design review process. Ms. Turner said the text was removed because there was a lot of repetition between major and minor work. He suggested adding at the end of the second paragraph: The issuance of a COA indicates that, in the opinion of the HPC, the proposed alterations, improvements, new construction, or demolition is consistent with the Guidelines and reflects the historic character of the District. Some landscaping, streetscaping and archaeological projects also require a COA, in the first paragraph add: moving of structures before new construction, in paragraph two and sentence three after improvements add: new construction, before landscaping add: any repair or replacement that involves a change in exterior design, materials or general appearance is defined as an alternation and requires an approved COA before work can begin, in paragraph two at the end of the fifth sentence add: In addition, properties that are subject to interior review (either publicly owned properties or those whose owners have requested interior review) must have an approved COA for alternations affecting historically significant interior features.

Chairperson Plaag said under the Evaluation Criteria for Proposed Construction, he did not see the definitions for Primary AVC, Secondary AVC and Tertiary AVC. He suggested putting these definitions back into the draft document between the Pre-Application Meetings and the Exemption to COA Design Review – Ordinary or Routine Maintenance. He also said that he would add the definitions back into the draft document.

Discussion ensued on the Pre-Application Meetings – Planning and Inspections Department Staff. Chairperson Plaag noted that this is a new section added to the draft document. He suggested changing the word: though to although in the first paragraph and first sentence,

Chairperson Plaag explained that he would try to have the proposed changes made to the draft document and emailed out to the HPC members by the end of this week for their review. He asked that the HPC review the draft document before the next meeting that will be held on Tuesday, December 17, 2019 at 3 p.m.

Member Brantz left the meeting at approximately 4:27 p.m.

Chairperson Plaag reviewed the section on Exemption to COA Design Review – Ordinary or Routine Maintenance. There were no proposed changes made to this section.

Chairperson Plaag reviewed the section on completing the Certificate of Appropriateness application. He said he would add the link to the Town of Boone website. He asked Ms. Turner, if there will be a fee associated with the COA application. Ms. Turner said that the Council would need to approve this fee. He suggested adding to this section: Completed applications are submitted to the Planning and Inspections Department, along with the required fee. He suggested not defining the fee amount in the draft document because the fee might change. He suggested adding: Applications are processed in accordance with the most recent Town of Boone Planning and Inspections Meeting Schedule.

Discussion ensued on the turn-around process of the review of the COA application. Ms. Turner noted that the Planning Staff tries to review a project in 20 days but she noted that Downtown Boone proposed projects take longer to review. Ms. Turner said the State requirement for the reviewing of projects is in the proposed text.

Chairperson Plaag noted that there was consensus from the HPC members that the repointing of brick should be under Major Work.

Chairperson Plaag reviewed the section of the draft document on the COA Application for Minor Work. He suggested changing in paragraph one and the first sentence: historical property to historical integrity or character of the property. He talked about the response time for Minor Work and it should be added to the proposed draft document. Ms. Turner said she would check on the response time.

Chairperson Plaag reviewed the Examples of Minor Work included in this section. He asked what the Planning Staff did with the text regarding dead and diseased trees that was included in the older version of the draft document for Minor Work. Ms. Turner said that she contacted Ms. Jennifer Cathy about it and she said that landscape plantings were not protected. He said that he would research this topic because he did not know about this.

Chairperson Plaag said that he would like to begin reviewing the section: Required Materials for COA Application for Minor Work at the next meeting.

Other Matters by Commission Members or Staff

At 4:49 p.m. Mr. David Spiceland from Appalachian State University joined the meeting.

Member Clawson made a motion, seconded by Member Bond to open agenda item, Other Matters by Commission Members or Staff.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Mr. Spiceland explained that he has taken a sabbatical from Appalachian State University and is working on putting together a couple of videos on the 1940-1941, Abandonment of the Railroad and he is working on a project for Avery County regarding photos of the railroad in the Cranberry area. He said may have them completed by May of 2020. He said he is hoping to get the videos on App TV. In his work, he will be doing interviews with local people during the spring semester. He gave his email address: spicelandrd@appstate.edu and asked if anyone had contact information for people who he might be able to interview on said topic. Some of the sources that were suggested were the Robbins family from Tweetsie Railroad, Mr. David Holt who is involved in the PBS channel and also noted that he has background music.

Chairperson Plaag suggested, Ms. Mary Helen Cole who has been involved in writing about the history of the area. Chairperson Plaag said he would email Mr. Spiceland the contact information that he has for Ms. Cole.

Chairperson Plaag reminded the HPC members about the Volunteer Breakfast that will be held on Friday, December 13, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. at the Dan'l Boone Inn Restaurant.

Chairperson Plaag suggested adding the following agenda item to the next HPC meeting agenda: Historic Design Guidelines.

Adjournment

With no other topics to discuss, Member Clawson made a motion, seconded by Member Watkins to adjourn the meeting at 5:02 p.m.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Eric Plaag, Chairperson

Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary