

**TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
April 2, 2024, 3:00 p.m.
Planning & Inspections Department & WebEx Video Conferencing**

Historic Preservation Commission Members in Attendance: Vardell Smyth-Chair, Bettie Bond-Vice-Chair, Krystal Carter, and Hannah Williams

Council Liaison: Virginia Roseman

Town Staff in Attendance: Jessica Mitchell-Advanced Planning Specialist, Mike James- Commercial Zoning Administrator, and Brenda Henson-Board Secretary

Others in Attendance: Allison Meade-Town Attorney

Call to Order

Chair Smyth called the HPC Quasi-Judicial meeting, held in person at 680 W. King Street, Suite C and via WebEx, on April 2, 2024, to order at 3:01 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

Vice-Chair Bond made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Williams, to adopt the agenda as presented.

Vote: Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

It was noted that the presenter for the Watauga County TDA case had not arrived at the meeting. Upon consent of the Commission members, the agenda was amended to move the Watauga County TDA case down on the agenda to allow time for all parties to be present.

Chair Smyth provided a brief synopsis of the Historic Preservation Commission, its makeup, and its function.

Mike James and Jessica Mitchell, Town Staff members, were sworn in by Chair Smyth.

Commission members indicated that they did not have fixed opinions or conflicts of interest regarding the cases on the agenda.

Case A24-0127 Goofyfoot Taproom – Certificate of Appropriateness

Jeff Thompson has submitted an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for Major Work for 525 West King Street (Estel and Lucille Wagner Building) located in the Downtown Boone Local Historic District to alter the primary and secondary elevations including altering the storefront on King Street (splitting the existing Jimmy John's location) by adding a new door and updating the awning. Additional work involves replacing a lower-level window on the secondary elevations.

Adrian Tait, architect for the project, was sworn in by Chair Smyth. He asked Mr. Tait if he had any objections to the materials contained in the meeting packet. Mr. Tait replied that he did not have any objections.

Mr. Tait explained that the Jimmy John's location in downtown Boone planned to subdivide the space into two spaces. The dining room on the left side of the building would become the Goofyfoot Taproom. Mr. Tait stated that this would require the creation of an additional entrance on the front of the building. He added that the entrance would mirror the Jimmy John's entrance with a brushed aluminum frame door. Mr. Tait stated that they proposed to remove the canvas from the awning on the front of the building and replace it with a new black canvas that would contain both the Goofyfoot and Jimmy John's logos. He noted that there was a window on the side of the building on Appalachian Street that they planned to replace because the glass fogged up badly. The Jimmy John's sign along Appalachian Street would be replaced with a Goofyfoot sign.

Vice-Chair Bond asked if the awning was historically appropriate. Chair Smyth stated that the awning frame was not being removed, and only the canvas was being replaced.

Chair Smyth asked if the original building had two doors. Mr. Tait replied that was correct.

Allison Meade, Town Attorney, asked what about this project triggered the COA process. Mr. James replied that the addition of the new entrance door created the need for a COA. Ms. Meade noted that there was no photo in the meeting packet depicting the current condition of the front of the building. She stated that, in her opinion, the replacement of the canvas would not require a permit of any kind. HPC members agreed that the replacement of the canvas on the awning did not need to be included in the COA request.

There was no public present to speak to this case.

Mr. Tait noted that he had nothing further to present, adding that the meeting packet contained the remainder of their evidence.

Motion and Vote:

Vice-Chair Bond made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Carter that the proposed development is congruous with the special character of the Downtown Boone Local Historic District because the second entrance door was original to the building and is approved subject to the following automatic conditions of approval:

- Where there is a conflict between the application information and the plans (October 24, 2023), the plans control. Insignificant deviations may be permitted to comply with the requirements of the UDO.
- Any commitments and representations concerning the proposed exterior modification made by the applicant or its representatives at the public hearing shall also become a condition of the permit, and a basis for a stop work order and/or permit revocation if violated.
- The applicant shall submit the necessary applications, plans, details, and specifications which meet the requirements of the Town Code, UDO, Building Code, and any other applicable codes for review and approval necessary to issue Zoning and Building Permits.

Vote: Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.

With no further discussion, Chair Smyth closed this case.

Case A24-0063 Watauga County TDA – Certificate of Appropriateness

The Watauga County District U Tourism Development has submitted an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for Major Work for 171 Grand Boulevard (AE and Roberta Hodges House) located in the Downtown Boone Local Historic District to alter the layout, slope, and dimensions of the driveways.

Jordan Mattar with VPC Builders and Wright Tilley with the Watauga County TDA were sworn in by Chair Smyth.

Chair Smyth asked if there were any objections to the material contained in the meeting packet. Neither Mr. Mattar nor Mr. Tilley voiced any objections.

Mr. Mattar outlined the request, stating that they planned to replace the roof and gutters, remove and encapsulate lead paint, repair leaking window wells, add planter beds, eliminate unsafe sidewalk on the side of the property, replace the retaining wall, restructure the parking lot to add handicap parking with a sidewalk to the building, repair drainage issues, and erect a new sign along Grand Boulevard in front of the building. Mr. Tilley added that the new sign would be encapsulated in brick to match the look of the building.

Mr. James stated that the alteration of the driveway was what triggered the need for a Certificate of Appropriateness, not the minor maintenance of the building.

Vice-Chair Bond stated that the building was a beautiful home, but the site had not been maintained, and it was long overdue. She asked how parking on the site would be enforced. Mr. Tilley replied that there would be hang tags for their staff to park in the lower parking lot, and the spaces that circled the building would be for guests and visitors. He stated that they would leave up the current towing signs for Bill's Garage.

Vice-Chair Bond noted the walking trail that was used as a cut-through from the library to the Jones House and asked if it would remain or be removed. Mr. Tilley replied that they would be making the stairs to the upper parking lot safer. He added that the TDA owned and maintained the property containing the path, and there were no plans to block the path.

Chair Smyth referred to 6.9, which stated that low evergreen hedges should be utilized along the street frontage of all parking lots. He asked if hedges should be installed instead of the landscaping items listed in the applicant's narrative. Mr. James explained that the project did not trigger those landscaping requirements with the tiered system in the UDO, so they could plant whatever they wanted within reason. He added that the plantings that the applicant proposed were for beautification purposes and not for screening the street yard.

There was no public present to speak to this case.

Motion and Vote:

Commission Member Carter made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Williams, that the proposed development is congruous with the special character of the Downtown Boone Local Historic District because Grand Boulevard is one of the oldest neighborhoods, and the applicant would be saving a beautiful house and is approved subject to the following automatic conditions of approval:

- Where there is a conflict between the application information and the plans (February 20, 2024), the plans control. Insignificant deviations may be permitted to comply with the requirements of the UDO.
- Any commitments and representations concerning the proposed exterior modification made by the applicant or its representatives at the public hearing shall also become a condition of the permit, and a basis for a stop work order and/or permit revocation if violated.

- The applicant shall submit the necessary applications, plans, details, and specifications which meet the requirements of the Town Code, UDO, Building Code, and any other applicable codes for review and approval necessary to issue Zoning and Building Permits.

Vote: Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.

With no further discussion, Chair Smyth closed this case.

Case A24-0128 Qualls Block – Certificate of Appropriateness

Will Clark has submitted an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for Major Work for 595, 597, and 605 West King Street (Greene & Wilcox Building, also known as the JL Qualls Block Building) located in the Downtown Boone Local Historic District to alter the primary and tertiary elevations, including removing the current awning, reconfiguring the storefront, replacing mismatched brick, and adding a door and exit stairs.

Dr. Eric Plaag, historical consultant, was affirmed by Chair Smyth. Dr. Plaag introduced Will and Josh Clark, representatives of the property owner Trade Land Company, LLC.

Chair Smyth asked if there were any objections to the materials contained in the meeting packet. Dr. Plaag replied that there were no objections.

Mr. Tait presented the request. He stated that this was a prominent building in Town, and the applicant planned to make some long-needed improvements. Mr. Tait noted that half of the building was vacant, and the other half contained Appalachian Sportswear and Venture Chocolate. He stated that the plan was to renovate and move Appalachian Sportswear into the vacant side of the building, which would allow Venture Chocolate to expand into the space vacated by Appalachian Sportswear. Mr. Tait noted that there would be changes to the facade, such as the removal of the awning, opening the transom windows above the storefronts, repointing the brick, and adding a new deck on the back of the building.

Dr. Plaag stated that pinpointing what made this building historic was challenging. He noted that the souvenir shop part of the building had a configuration that dated to 1965, which placed it one year outside of the period of historic significance. The two storefronts on the left dated in the late 1940s or early 1950s with the spatial orientation falling within the period of significance. Dr. Plaag stated that the second floor looked essentially the same as its original iteration in 1923, with the exception that all of the second-floor windows had been replaced. The door in the middle of the first-floor elevation had been moved, and there were missing pieces of historical material. Dr. Plaag stated that there was not enough critical mass of materials from that period of significance that would be adversely impacted by the proposed changes. In this case, the property owner would be allowed to create a new design using materials and design elements that were congruous with the district and appropriate to the building and its history. Dr. Plaag stated that there was nothing defining about the tertiary elevation.

Chair Smyth stated that Dr. Plaag's report was thoroughly written.

Dr. Plaag added that a fire in 1952 badly damaged the upper story of this building so the bricks were painted to cover the damage.

Chair Smyth stated that this was a good project. He noted that 2/3 of the original storefronts basically did not exist anymore and the proposed renovations would be complimentary to the original historic character of the building.

Motion and Vote:

Commission Member Carter made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Williams, that the proposed development is congruous with the special character of the Downtown Boone Local Historic District and is approved subject to the following automatic conditions of approval:

- Where there is a conflict between the application information and the plans (February 23, 2024), the plans control. Insignificant deviations may be permitted to comply with the requirements of the UDO.
- Any commitments and representations concerning the proposed exterior modification made by the applicant or its representatives at the public hearing shall also become a condition of the permit, and a basis for a stop work order and/or permit revocation if violated.
- The applicant shall submit the necessary applications, plans, details, and specifications which meet the requirements of the Town Code, UDO, Building Code, and any other applicable codes for review and approval necessary to issue Zoning and Building Permits.

Vote: Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

With no further discussion, Chair Smyth closed this case.

Dana Folk Way Update

Ms. Mitchell referred to packet page 242, which contained the draft text for the plaque for Dana Folk Way. She noted that Mr. and Mrs. Folk had approved the text as written. Ms. Mitchell stated that she had gotten copy proofs from two different companies, which she shared with Commission members. She added that she was trying to determine if the plaque would mount to the brick based on the measurements of the mortar joints, and final confirmation from the property manager was pending.

The following changes to the draft text were suggested by Commission members:

- Add the word “The” before Dana Folk Way
- Add date of birth to say “Dana Folk, born in 1948 in Boone, was raised in Philadelphia...”
- Change to “Dana Folk was elected to the Boone Town Council in October 1999...”
- Remove the first sentence that says “The Town of Boone dedicates this pedestrian way in honor of Dana Folk”
- Remove “DEDICATION OF” from the heading
- Change “earning highest number of votes” to “receiving highest number of votes”
- Change the last line to say “Dedicated 2024”

There was consensus of the Commission members regarding the suggested changes to the text.

Ms. Mitchell stated she was looking at an aluminum sign with black etching. The logo's placement was discussed. Some Commission members preferred the logo on the side, and some preferred the logo on the top. Ms. Mitchell stated that she would present the revised text and plaque options to the Town Council for the final selection and approval.

Other Discussion

There was no other discussion.

Adjournment

Commission Member Williams made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Bond, to adjourn the meeting at 4:52 p.m.

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

Vardell Smyth, Chair

Brenda Henson, Board Secretary