

**TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 28, 2024, 3:00 p.m.
Planning & Inspections Department & WebEx Video Conferencing**

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

Council Liaison: Virginia Roseman (via WebEx)

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

Others in Attendance: Allison Meade-Town Attorney (via WebEx)

Call to Order

Chair Smyth called the Boone Historic Preservation Commission meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. The meeting was held in the Planning & Inspections Conference Room at 680 West King Street and via WebEx.

Adoption of Agenda

Vice-Chair Bond moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Commission Member Williams seconded the motion.

Vote: Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

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

Case A24-0224 174 South Depot Street – Certificate of Appropriateness

Bill Dixon, on behalf of property owner Michael Thaler, has submitted an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for Major Work for 174 South Depot Street (WT0604 Brendell's Garage Building #1) located in the Downtown Boone Local Historic District. The request includes the demolition of the existing building and the construction of a new two-story mixed-use structure (ground-floor commercial space and 4 apartments on the second floor).

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

Chair Smyth affirmed Bill Dixon, applicant and architect for the proposed project, and swore in Leigh Blevins with Appalachian Architecture.

Commission members indicated they had no fixed opinions or conflicts of interest and had not participated in ex-parte communication regarding this case. Chair Smyth stated that he went to look at the building but did not talk with anyone.

Chair Smyth asked Mr. Dixon if he had any objections to the material in the meeting packet. Mr. Dixon replied that he did not have any objections.

Mr. Dixon noted that the pre-application workshop was beneficial and appreciated that process. He referred to packet page 26, which contained his answers to questions asked by Mr. James in an email on April 23, 2024. Mr. Dixon provided members with a copy of the April 23 email so they would have some context to the information in his responses on packet page 26 **(Email on file)**.

Mr. Dixon stated that this was a two-part request. The first request was for approval to demolish the 174 South Depot Street building, and the second was to build a new one.

Mr. Dixon believed the building had exceeded its useful lifespan. He noted that the front part of the building was nice. The back part, which had always been used for storage, was falling in and in horrible shape.

Mr. Dixon stated that he had looked through the inventory classifications in the original document inventories; this property was considered a CH classification, which meant it contributed to the character of the district based on its historical significance related to events or individuals associated with the property. The building was not a CA classification and was not of architectural significance, so it should be allowed to be torn down.

Ms. Meade stated that the Commission could not delay the demolition period by more than 12 months, as outlined in Article 8 of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).

Mr. Dixon requested that HPC not delay the demolition for 12 months but make it contingent on them getting the new building permitted and approved, which would likely take 6-8 months. Mr. Dixon noted that Digital Watauga had done a great job of documenting the building and did not feel a need to document more. He stated that this project would not negatively affect the other buildings beside it, even though the property lines were within the center of the walls. He added that they would not cut the walls in half but would have a self-supporting building and respect those walls.

Commission Member Williamson thought that the demolition of the building was appropriate.

Commission Member Williams added that the building was deteriorated.

Chair Smyth asked if an engineer needed to certify that the building had deteriorated to the point that it needed to be demolished. Mr. James replied that he thought they could accept the applicant's information and documentation unless the Commission felt it was insufficient or they wanted an expert second opinion. Ms. Meade stated that when someone claimed a building was unsafe and needed to be torn down, the Commission could delay the demolition to obtain proof that the demolition was warranted, which was addressed in the standards on packet page 57.

Mr. Dixon stated that the documentation from Digital Watauga showed the building's history. Chair Smyth noted that nothing inside the building was significant, and the back of the building was deteriorated.

Jane Shook, Director of Planning & Inspections, was affirmed by Chair Smyth. Ms. Shook stated that the UDO did not allow the demolition of a building without the approval of a zoning permit for redevelopment.

There was no public present to speak to this case.

Mr. Dixon noted that he had nothing further to present regarding the demolition of the building.

Motion and Vote:

Vice-Chair Bond made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Williams, to approve the demolition of the building at 174 South Depot Street, subject to the UDO requirement that an approved zoning permit must be obtained.

Vote: Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Mr. Dixon stated that the pre-application workshop provided great feedback, and changes to the plan were made based on comments received. He noted that there would be more glass on the lower level than required, no balconies, the awning size would be reduced, and red brick and rockwork similar to the adjacent building would be used.

Chair Smyth referred to 14.3 and 14.7 regarding scale and massing. He expressed concern about the building being two stories, noting that most of the surrounding buildings were one-story. Chair Smyth felt that keeping the height low matched a smaller town feel and would be more in keeping with the character of the area. He added that there were lots of places for high-density development that were not located in Downtown Boone.

Commission Member Williamson stated he did not have the same concern as Chair Smyth.

Mr. Dixon stated they would also have to go through a Conditional District Zoning Map Amendment to gain approval from the Town Council and Planning Commission to build a two-story building at this location.

Vice-Chair Bond stated she did not find the two stories to be offensive.

Ms. Meade referred to page 44 of the meeting packet depicting architectural details. She noted the bricks that created a horizontal banding at the top under the parapet and asked what that was called. Mr. Dixon stated that was a reveal, and the bricks would be inset about $\frac{3}{4}$ " to create a shadow line. He added that the vertical brick over the windows was called a soldier course. Ms. Meade asked if a native stone would be used on the building. Mr. Dixon replied that it would be stone quarried out of Mt. Airy.

Ms. Meade referred to packet page 35 and asked which mortar joint would be used. Mr. Dixon stated that the bottom photo would better reflect the type of mortar joint they planned to use. He explained that a darker brick would be used with a brick reveal every few brick courses. A concrete parapet cap, similar to the Farmer's Hardware and Ben & Jerry's building would be used.

Vice-Chair Bond felt the transition from brick to stone on that block would provide a good flow and make the two-story building not seem so dramatic.

Mr. Dixon added that they thought they could accommodate two parking spaces in the back of the building, one of which would be handicapped. Assuming they could provide the two spaces in the back, they would have to provide two additional parking spaces at another location.

Ms. Meade suggested that the HPC place a condition on the approval regarding the materials and architectural elements so there would be no question about what would be allowed. Chair Smyth asked if it was not implied that what was presented was what would be constructed. Ms. Meade replied that pictures presented a physical appearance that did not always become a reality. She offered that Mr. Dixon could provide affirmation that the details and materials proposed in the meeting packet and discussed during the meeting would be what was used. Mr. Dixon agreed.

Motion and Vote:

Vice-Chair Bond 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:

- Where there is a conflict between the application information and the plans (March 28, 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 – 3 (Bond, Williams, Williamson)

Nay – 1 (Smyth)

The motion passed.

With no further discussion, Chair Smyth closed this case.

Other Matters

Ms. Mitchell reminded HPC members of the Public Hearing/Planning Commission meeting scheduled for May 29, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. She noted that the Local Historic Landmark cases for the R.L. Clay (Rivers) House Property and H.W. Horton Building would be discussed, and HPC members were asked to meet in the Planning & Inspections Conference Room for the meeting.

Ms. Mitchell stated that the Historic Preservation Commission's June meetings were scheduled for June 4 and June 11, 2024.

Adjournment

Vice-Chair Bond made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Williams, to adjourn the meeting at 4:15 p.m.

Vote: Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Vardell Smyth, Chair

Brenda Henson, Board Clerk