

**TOWN OF BOONE
SPECIAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

OCTOBER 17, 2023, 3:00 p.m.

Planning and Inspections Conference Room & WebEx Video Conferencing

Historic Preservation Commission Members in Attendance:

Chair Eric Plaag, Vice-Chair Bettie Bond, Chuck Watkins, Vardell Smyth, and Riley Ziegler

Council Liaison: Virginia Roseman

Town Staff in Attendance: Jane Shook-Director of Planning & Inspections, Jessica Mitchell-Advanced Planning Specialist, and Marlene Crosby-Board Secretary

Others in Attendance: Mayor Tim Futrelle, Mayor Pro-Tem Edie Tugman, Anna Boyce Winker Phillips, Stephen Phillips, Elizabeth Phillips, Brenda Council, Jill Privott, Rebecca Triplett-Johnson, Dr. Andrea Burns-Appalachian State University History Department, Junaluska Heritage Association Members: Roberta Jackson, Diane Blanks, Katie Mack and Dr. Sue Keefe

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Eric Plaag called the Special HPC meeting, in the Planning and Inspections Conference Room and via WebEx, on October 17, 2023, to order at 3:00 p.m.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chair Plaag asked to amend the agenda to include Public Comment. Student Member Ziegler made a motion, seconded by Member Smyth, to adopt the agenda as amended.

Vote: Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Plaag opened the floor for public comment. He told the speakers they had five minutes to speak and he asked them to state their names and if they were a resident of Boone.

The first speaker was Ms. Karolyn Mack, a Boone resident and a Junaluska Heritage Association member. She said that she had relocated back to Boone in 2018. She noted that Boone had radically changed since she had lived here in 1970, especially in the area surrounding the Boone Cemetery. She was surprised to see the Boone Cemetery in the condition that it is in now compared to when she used to live in Boone. She stated that as a member of the JHA, she supported the messaging on the cemetery panels. She suggested encouraging residents and visitors with a brief compilation of facts about the Junaluska Community and attracting further interest in Boone, North Carolina. She made suggestions for changes to the text of the proposed cemetery panels that she hoped would encourage others to continue their research into the details of the lives of the 162 Black people who were buried in the Boone Cemetery. She talked about the African American funeral traditions and burial practices from the 1800s and 1900s by Black families in Boone. She said they would dig the graves with the heads facing west and the feet facing east, use handmade coffins, or wrap them in blankets or quilts before being interred into the soil. She suggested including the meanings of the terminology and language used in the Black people's ceremonies

related to the customs that the whole community used. When a death occurred, Black families used terms like “death door,” “wake,” “living room,” “saved by the bell,” and “home going.” She added that these terms have a different meaning today than in an earlier day. She talked about the role the Black ancestors played in the growth and development of Boone during the early 1900s, which benefited both white and Black residents. She suggested the proposed text include the Black-operated coal yard. In conclusion, she stated that she was happy to be a part of the JHA, and every gesture that the HPC can make to honor the legacy that the Black Community has contributed to Boone would be greatly appreciated.

The second speaker was Ms. Jill Privott, a resident of Boone. She supported Member Watkins's final draft recommendation presented in the October 2023 meeting that included his approach to the differences of opinion regarding the wording and quantity of the cemetery panels. She explained that since she had attended the HPC meetings discussing the cemetery panels and listening to letters from Mayor Pro-Tem Edie Tugman. She wanted to clarify some things because of the focus that has been on the Council family not wanting their family history presented regarding slavery. She said this was incorrect and that her exposure to all of the family representatives has only been that the narrative does not contain opinion, conjecture, and mischaracterized history. She pointed out that the revised draft cemetery panel text included corrections to the opinion and conjecture in the statements, dates, and grammar presented in the original cemetery panel language only after the Town Council addressed these things. She stated that all the Council family wanted was an objective and more accurate presentation of their family's history. She added the original draft language did not show the need for more objectivity in the wording but about the quantity and style of the cemetery panel text being intrusive and disrespectful at large. She noted that the cemetery is a place of reverence and dignity for those visiting the cemetery. Ms. Privott recommended from a history and historical preservation perspective that a sentence needed to be added about the JHA placing a marker with the year in honor of all African Americans known to be buried there, including enslaved or former enslaved people, which has become a standard in the federal and state level parks. Ms. Privott said it would be incomplete historically to not include in the draft cemetery panel text the historical placement of the monument that the JHA placed in the cemetery.

The third speaker was Ms. Diane Blanks, a Boone resident and a JHA member. She stated that Mr. Fredrick Warman, her paternal grandfather, was buried in the white section of the Boone Cemetery. He was the pastor of the Boone Adventist Church and a Sociology Professor, and maybe the first person to teach at Appalachian State Teacher College with a doctorate. She stated that the following sentence in the draft cemetery panel text is not needed and needlessly upset some people, “Under the economic realities of systemic racism, finely carved monuments often marked graves in the west section, while fieldstones marked most east section graves if they were marked at all.” She pointed out that not having a finely carved marker was not an indication of systemic racism around Boone but a sign of family finances. She said there were a fair number of white people in this area whose graves were marked with a flat rock, including some of her relatives. She stated that the following section should be rewritten in the draft cemetery panel text “Meanwhile, on the further act of segregation, Black residents were directed to inter their loved ones in the colored cemetery on the old County Home site located three miles west of here is the Clarissa Hill cemetery,” instead of the Mount Lawn Memorial Park and Gardens, a racially exclusive cemetery where most Whites were buried after 1950. She asked Ms. Sandra Hagler of the Junaluska Community why the Black Community had burials at Clarissa Hill. Ms. Hagler told her it was because the Black section of the Boone Cemetery was full. Ms. Blanks suggested that the text regarding the Black portion of the Boone Cemetery be on one panel, another panel about the white section, and the "How to Behave in the Cemetery" sign.

The fourth speaker was Ms. Anna Boyce Winkler Phillips, a resident of Boone. She told Chair Plagg that she appreciated all of the hours of research that had been done to help preserve the history of Boone and the efforts through Digital Watauga. She talked about the book entitled "Remembering Boone," which was also written to preserve the history of Boone. She pointed out that the part missing in the research process was that the Black or White people who grew up in Boone had not been interviewed to see how they interacted with each other. She had made a list of the people buried in the cemetery and she wanted their families interviewed so the HPC could learn about their everyday life. She apologized to the Junaluska Community because her ancestors bought enslaved people and that it affected them in a negative way. She stated that she appreciated the Junaluska Community.

The fifth speaker was Ms. Brenda Councill, a resident of Watauga County. She stated that she was representing 15 descendants of the Jordan Councill family. She pointed out that this is the fourth meeting on this subject including a Town Council meeting that she had attended. She said that collectively, her committee has been advocating the elimination of excessive commentary and racially provocative phrases. She said the Councill family supported the recommendation made by Member Watkins regarding "common ground" after he read the correspondence and documentation issued by prominent historians, researchers, preservationists, and families, including oral histories. She said the Boone Cemetery is a reverend and sacred space, and no family or group has supremacy over another. She added that no single historian should have jurisdiction over the descendants of those individuals buried within it. She noted that this was a collective and should have been a collective from the beginning. She said the descendants of the Councils interred in the cemetery did not advocate further highlighting their contribution to signage. She supported Member Watkins's recommendation to reduce the number of panels. She did not support listing individuals on any placard, sign display, or permanent feature within the Boone Cemetery. She supported the proposed QR codes and brochures to show the many contributions that individuals and families have made to the Town. She stated that the current graphic design and marker choice needed to be reviewed because it is invasive and has a temporal aesthetic. She pointed out that a vertically permanent bronze, aluminum, cast stone, granite, or cast aggregate choice promotes permanent installation and adheres to best practices for permanent marker and public art placement standards. She added that references to specific historic cemetery informational markers in Old Salem, Charleston, Atlanta, and Savannah are not invasive to sacred spaces. She said it is unfortunate the Town of Boone has not regarded these standards. In summary, she thanked the HPC for their consideration on this matter.

The sixth speaker was Ms. Rebecca Triplett-Johnson, a former resident of Boone. She stated she represented those who could not attend from her family and many other ancestors in the cemetery including the Hardin, Triplett, and Councill families. One point Ms. Triplett-Johnson made was the general public needed to know about the proposed draft cemetery panel project. She added that many people needed to be informed that the information from the HPC's discussions of the draft cemetery panels was posted on the Town website because a public announcement had not occurred. She said the deadlines that the HPC has made for people to send in valuable historical knowledge are irrelevant because those who need to be a part of it still need to be made aware that the project is happening. She added that we should focus on the wording on the draft cemetery panels, reach out to everyone who wants to participate in the project and share their valuable knowledge. She said the panel discussions should be concise with direct general information. She supported Member Watkins's recommendation regarding the draft cemetery panels. She said the primary focus should be to reach out to people in the Boone, Watauga County, Allegheny County, and Avery County areas because some of the people with close relatives that may be buried there may not be living in the Boone area right now. In closing, she hoped that a deadline would no longer be used, and a resolution would be made.

Ms. Mitchell pointed out that she had received a phone call from Ms. Phyllis Templeton and Mr. Phil Templeton, and they stated that they supported the recommendation made by Member Watkins regarding the draft cemetery panels. Ms. Mitchell received a phone call from Ms. Reba Moretz, who stated she had lived in Boone since 1936, read Member Watkins's memo, and stated that Member Watkins should have more responsibility for the project because of his work experience with the museum. Ms. Mitchell continued with Ms. Moretz's statement of the appreciation of Member Watkins's knowledge of how to move the project forward, and was glad that someone was continuing the proposed cemetery panel project.

Chair Plaag opened the floor for people in the meeting room to make remarks.

Mayor Pro-Tem Edie Tugman of the Boone Town Council stated that she had contacted several people who have called or asked to speak about this issue. She explained that the Town Council is responsible for appointing the Commission members, and that the Town Council ensures that every Commission member has the credentials, experience, and knowledge to serve on a Commission. She pointed out that the Historic Preservation Commission has significant responsibility and takes its positions seriously. She noted that she did not believe the community understood the thousands of hours that went into the Town meetings. She stated that the HPC has often allowed the community to submit appropriate historical documentation about the proposed cemetery panels. She stated that she implicitly trusted the HPC to find what was in the community's best interest. She said the proposed cemetery panel project had been going on for several months, and the meeting packet was published every time there was a meeting. She said an accurate historical perspective of the cemetery should take place. She added that the Town Council appointed the HPC to perform this task.

Mayor Pro-Tem Tugman stated that she did not know that the Western Youth Network building was the newest segregated Black school in Watauga County until the Town Council recently contracted to purchase it. She said it was built six years after segregation was supposed to have stopped in this country. She said in 1965 and 1966, the Black students did not attend school in their community, but they were dispersed to schools all over the county.

Mayor Pro-Tem Tugman said that she grew up in a time when her parents chose what she believed, and they did not illustrate to her integration and segregation, which meant that her experience of what happened to our Black communities was not accurate. She said that as much as we would love to believe the people in the Black community were equally integrated into this community, it is less likely for history to tell this information. She explained that those who fail to understand history are doomed to repeat it if they do not illustrate the mistakes made in generations past. She was sorry that this information offended some families. She noted that when the HPC drafted the text for the Council's Store historical marker, everyone was glad about it. She said the families do not want the names of some people mentioned on plaques because it implies historically that they may have been involved in the same racial ignorance that all of our families were a part of. She said it was not until 1982 that she learned that her family came from Haiti because a slave told them about an incoming slave uprising. They left their sugar plantations and moved to Charleston, SC. She added that her great-grandfather was a General Beauregard Palmetto Dunes regiment member who fired upon Fort Sumter. She noted she was not proud of her family for this reason.

Chair Plaag opened the floor for public comment from anyone attending the meeting virtually.

Ms. Diane Blanks stated that she grew up in Boone, and in the 1940s through the 1960s, people had two options to refer to the people who lived in the Junaluska Community. The available words were "colored" and the "N" word. She said friendly people used the word "colored" because they thought it was more respectful.

Ms. Roberta Jackson, a resident of Boone and a JHA member, talked about how it was when she went to school here in Boone. She read everything she could find in the library because she was interested in history. She appreciated the research on the proposed cemetery panels project and wanted the story told like it happened.

Chair Plaag closed the floor for public comment at approximately 3:48 p.m.

Chair Plaag addressed remarks by the three individuals made during this meeting or listed in the meeting packet. He pointed out that it was not true that he created the cemetery panel text, and forced it upon the Town or anything similarly constructed in that way. He said the work on the cemetery panel text was the collaborative effort of five highly qualified people, three of them being career-long historians, one is a student representative studying history, and a member from the community with a long-standing interest in local history. He talked about interpreting the cemetery with four panels, which was not the idea of these HPC members. He explained that the previous Town Manager specifically directed the HPC as an extension of their duties granted by the Town Council to begin three years ago to write interpretive panels for the cemetery. He said there had been times when the HPC asked him to create an initial draft for the HPC to review to come to an agreement on how to proceed. He said it is fiction to suggest that the project to interpret the proposed cemetery panels text was of his personal doing. He said this was not true, and he had approached his duties as a member of this Commission by bearing in mind the code of ethics that he agreed to when he became a historian and joined five different professional historical organizations. He said he had made decisions during this process in the discussions and of the cemetery panel drafts by keeping in mind those ethical codes, and he would continue to follow them. He said he would vote no on any panels that do not meet the ethical codes.

Chair Plaag addressed a specific remark made by Ms. Anna Boyce Winkler Philips regarding him not being from Boone. He stated that it was true that he was not from Boone; he grew up in Northern Virginia. He continued to explain that he was not from Appalachia, but he and his wife visited and then moved here because they liked the area. He said he was committed to this community by helping interpret its history.

Chair Plaag said that he and Vice-Chair Bond were part of an oral history interview process for the Appalachian Theatre for about 60 people who grew up and lived most of their lives in Boone. He said he sat in on about 55 interviews and conducted at least 45 discussions. He said they interviewed the people about their memories of the Town and growing up during the Appalachian Theatre's heyday. He said this project was completed over eight years. He noted that he had done the library research, talked to people, and captured their oral histories. Ms. Anna Boyce Winkler Phillips asked Chair Plaag if the people he talked with in the interviews were born in Boone. Chair Plaag replied that one of his favorite interviews was with Ms. Mary Helen Cole, who was 100 years old and went to school in Boone in the 1930s and lived in Boone for many years. He said that black and white people were interviewed and talked about their childhood memories growing up here and going to that theater. He said this was one of the most valuable projects he had ever done in his career. Ms. Phillips asked which years did the people share their memories. Chair Plaag responded the people he interviewed talked about their memories from the 1930s and 1940s.

Chair Plaag suggested that people stop using defamatory language and highlighting specific individuals and highlight specific individuals in the HPC participating because it is the work of the entire HPC body. Chair Plaag noted that he found it difficult, and it troubled him to have several conversations with some people who have been engaged in personal attacks through correspondence with the HPC. He stated that he had not engaged in personal attacks on anyone at any time in this process, and he did not appreciate it when it came from people who were also engaged in this same process.

Chair Plaag pointed out that the HPC would discuss Member Watkins's revision to the draft cemetery panels provided at the last meeting. As well as the information that Member Smyth had worked on by taking information from Member Watkins's draft and other earlier drafts to propose three panels, one with the cemetery's rules, one introductory panel, and one on the old fence line in the cemetery.

Ms. Jane Shook, Director of Planning and Inspections, clarified with Chair Plaag that the revision the HPC was preparing to discuss had yet to go to the Town Council for their review. Chair Plaag said that was correct, and the HPC had chosen to discuss this revision.

Chair Plaag addressed a complaint about the graphic design. He said the HPC had yet to begin to discuss the graphic design for the cemetery panels, except for possible photographic images that might be included. He said a Staff person had contacted Vacker Signs, a well-respected design-producing company that has made signs for the Boone Greenway. Ms. Mitchell clarified they are a similar company to what the Town has used for the Boone Greenway signage, but is not the company previously used. She said the Town has researched different sign companies, and Vacker Sign Company has the most information and provides a design service. Chair Plaag added that the Vacker Sign Company has worked with the National Park Service to develop their signage. He said the sign configuration discussed by the HPC are typically used in National Parks to facilitate this type of interpretation.

BOONE CEMETERY INTERPRETATIVE PANELS

Chair Plaag pointed out that a recent change had been made to Member Watkins's revision to the cemetery panels since the last meeting on October 3, 2023 (permanently on file). Member Watkins reviewed the changes that he had made including:

- Starting with the paragraph that reads, "This is not a comprehensive list." The last sentence has an addition after the phrase "QR Codes or websites," which is "(See Mount Auburn Cemetery in Massachusetts, for example)."
- He eliminated some extraneous words to reduce the word count.
- The end of the paragraph that starts with, "Here is what I propose," he added, "Both paragraphs, in my opinion, should appear on a single panel."
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Chair Plaag suggested that the HPC discuss Member Watkins's proposed revision to see if other HPC members have concerns with the proposed changes. Member Watkins noted that his intention was not for his proposed changes to be definitive but to offer one way to get one sign out of it, even if you put the same sign in two places.

Chair Plaag asked the HPC how they felt about having only one panel in the cemetery. Vice-Chair Bond stated that there should be at least two panels because one of the panels should be for the rules and regulations in the cemetery. She talked about how the HPC had once discussed having a brochure holder on one of the panels and incorporating a way for people to find the cemetery with the Downtown Boone Walking Tours.

Member Smyth suggested two interpretative panels and one sign containing the cemetery's rules. He said one interpretative panel could be at the entrance and one interpretative panel at the top of the hill on the dividing line. He said the marker text for the interpretative panel on the dividing line should include the history of segregation, which was important, and the JHA should have the maximum input to help tell this story. Vice-Chair Bond noted that the interpretative panel language should coordinate with the monument installed in the cemetery by the JHA. Student Member Ziegler, Member Smyth and Vice-Chair Bond agreed that a minimum of two interpretative panels was enough for the cemetery.

Student Member Ziegler agreed that more information can be conveyed through QR codes or websites. She added that with the amount of detail in the panels, she asked what we would need to add in a QR code. Chair Plaag agreed with the proposal that two content interpretative panels are needed, and the rules of behavior should be on some type of signage. He noted that he had sent Ms. Mitchell some examples of this type of signage separate from the interpretative panels.

Chair Plaag talked about potentially placing the individual's names on the panels. He decided that if you are going to include one individual's name, you need to include all of their names or none of them and refer to them generically. He referenced the version of the draft cemetery panels text presented in September and added that he made this proposed change to the draft text. He added that it was possible to add Benjamin Councill, Sr.'s name because he was the person who owned the cemetery land. He did not think that any individual's name should be included on the panels for the reasons that Ms. Brenda Councill pointed out, as well as the other Councill descendants. He said there was a significant risk of ignoring certain individuals, or their descendants being offended by being potentially excluded or included. He noted that he had added a longer sentence about the types of important people buried there. He suggested that adding that to the front panel would be the way to handle it, and this language could be created later.

Member Smyth agreed with Chair Plaag about not naming the individuals. Member Smyth noted that the Town website's HPC webpage could list all those individuals and their stories. Chair Plaag said there has yet to be a lot of discussion on what would be included in the QR codes. He explained that the HPC had begun a survey in the Boone Cemetery to provide Staff with that information. He said it had been six or seven years since that work started, but the Town Council asked the HPC to stop the survey work because they wanted the HPC to work on the Downtown Boone Historic District and other priorities. He added that the completed survey work at the Boone Cemetery should be at least verified or possibly redone. He explained that some thought should be given to who would be doing the reporting and vetting to make the information accurate. He thought this project might benefit from asking students from Dr. Deathridge's or Dr. Burns's Appalachian State University history classes to do some of the work with one of the HPC members overseeing the work. He said the first part was that the first QR code would include the individuals known in the cemetery, which would include a list with dates and the information on the headstone. He said the next part is telling the stories of the individuals on the list. He explained that after he leaves the HPC at the end of the year to serve as a Town Council member, this proposed work of telling the stories of the people buried in the cemetery would fall to the HPC, an intern, or an ASU class. He noted that this type of work would take much time to complete.

Chair Plaag suggested not including anything about QR codes directly in the panel text, but instead using a sticker system or a website as an applique to the signs to help lead the public to learn more about the cemetery and linking to the Downtown Boone Walking Tours. Member Smyth added that when this information is ready, there would need to be an individual who would handle the backend interface to manage the linking and the changing of technology.

Chair Plaag handed out a copy of a revision that he had made to the first panel (permanently on file). He pointed out that he had reduced it to about 250 words. He explained that he had taken information from the draft presented in September, and Member Smyth's and Member Watkins's recommendations, and captured the best parts from those sources.

Chair Plaag confirmed with the HPC that there was consensus on not including individuals' names in the cemetery text other than possibly including those early Council individuals. There was consensus.

Additionally, Chair Plaag confirmed with the HPC that there was consensus on having a rules and regulations sign separate from the panels, one introductory interpretative panel at the front of the cemetery, one interpretative panel on the dividing line between the two sections. There was consensus.

Discussion ensued on the placement of the sign for the rules of the cemetery. Member Smyth said if the sign was outside the cemetery, people would have a greater chance of seeing it. Chair Plaag confirmed with the HPC that there was consensus on putting the sign outside the cemetery.

Chair Plaag read aloud the revision of Panel #1: Boone Cemetery, as shared with members at the meeting. He opened the floor for feedback on it. Member Smyth pointed out in the third paragraph that the text did not have to state the sentence: "Since then, the Town has installed a new perimeter fence and a retaining wall at the east end of the cemetery to prevent erosion, cleared the grounds of overgrowth, cleaned and reset stones, and created cemetery interpretative programs," because all of that is self-evident by viewing the cemetery. Vice-Chair Bond agreed with Member Smyth because it is obvious all of that stuff has occurred. Student Member Ziegler said it was good to include this text because it is not obvious that the Town installed the fence and retaining wall at the cemetery. Member Smyth said the text should include that "the Town of Boone acquired both sections of the Boone Cemetery to provide for long-term preservation." Chair Plaag said to Student Member Ziegler's point that the text should read, "In 2015, the Town of Boone acquired both sections of the Boone Cemetery. Since then, the Town has made several improvements to the cemetery to provide for its long-term preservation."

Member Smyth stated that he had heard people talk about a deadline during public comment. He said there is yet to be an actual deadline for when this project needs to be completed. He suggested that the current version of the cemetery interpretative panels draft be placed on the Historic Preservation Commission webpage to make it easily accessible for everyone. He said this would eliminate everyone from going through the meeting packets to find the information on the interpretative panels.

Chair Plaag stated that through social media, the Town has repeatedly noted that the HPC was discussing and directing people to the meeting packets. He added that there is a form that the public can use to submit their feedback through the Town website. Ms. Mitchell stated that Staff could make a separate subpage like there currently is for the Historic District Local Historic Landmarks and Markers and the Boone Street Names Project. She said the Staff could present the latest information with a form, as information is submitted to Staff, it can be presented in the HPC meetings. She said she could also create a link to the Town meeting portal so the previous meeting packets with the latest version of the draft cemetery interpretative panels could be viewed.

Ms. Shook clarified that deadlines were set for the submission of information. She suggested a deadline also be set for the submission of the forms. Chair Plaag mentioned the requests that had been made for a media blitz notifying every resident in a seven-county area about the cemetery panel project. He explained that doing a media blitz as requested was cost-prohibitive for the Town to reach out to each

individual. He added that he did not think the Town Council would support this type of expense when there are modern ways to engage the public for free by using the Town website and the HPC meetings.

Chair Plaag said during public comment, the topic of signage at cemeteries was mentioned in places like Old Salem and Charleston, South Carolina, and the Bonaventure Cemetery in Savannah, Georgia areas, he did some research in these areas on their signage. Ms. Mitchell screen shared the images for meeting attendees. Chair Plaag discussed a distinction that confused some people commenting on the signage. He said the Bonaventure Cemetery in Savannah, Georgia, is the best example of signage. He noted several historical markers are installed at the grave site of a famous person buried in the Bonaventure Cemetery in Savannah. Still, he added, there is only official signage of the cemetery if they are specifically a Savannah Historic Marker, and some of them might be. He showed photos of the signage at the Bonaventure and St. Phillips cemeteries. He noted that the sign is on a post that includes the basic rules, some text identifying the cemetery, and a phone number to call in an emergency.

Chair Plaag iterated that the tours done last year in Downtown Boone were not ghost tours of the cemetery. He said they were lantern-led historical tours, no jump scares, no ghost hunting equipment used, and no one was in costume for any of the tours. He added that he would not support ghost tours in the Boone Cemetery.

Member Watkins pointed out that "grave markers are unstable" is a good phrase to include in the rules and regulation signage.

Chair Plaag viewed the signage for the Unitarian Church in Charleston, South Carolina. He said it included basic rules. He supported the phrase that Member Watkins pointed out about the unstable grave markers, and thought it should be added to the list of things about the cemetery. He said this wording on the sign could be written with these suggestions, and the sign would be placed outside the cemetery.

Chair Plaag described the sign at the Salem Moravian graveyard. He said he was not interested in prohibiting photography in the Boone Cemetery. He pointed out that they included the cemetery's history in about 200 to 250 words. Student Member Ziegler and Member Watkins did not support the appearance of it.

Ms. Anna Boyce Winkler Phillips and Mr. Stephen Phillips left the meeting at approximately 4:42 p.m.

Chair Plaag stated that completes the review of the signage mentioned explicitly by the commentators, other than the interpretive markers that are cast iron and about a specific individual.

Chair Plaag stated that in the Bonaventure Cemetery, he found the cast iron historical markers next to a grave to be more intrusive than what was proposed because in the Boone Cemetery, there could be potentially 40 of them, and he did not support that idea.

Member Watkins referred to the first sentence of the first paragraph of the revision to Panel #1: Boone Cemetery. He was uncertain that anyone cared that the cemetery was owned by Benjamin Councill, Sr., who likely inherited the land. Chair Plaag responded that this concern was brought up with Member Watkins's latest draft recommendation, although Member Watkins's text did not include it. He said the early criticisms were that Benjamin Councill, Sr. was not mentioned, and they insisted that his name be associated with the cemetery. Chair Plaag agreed that the following text could be removed from the first

sentence, "and was once owned by Benjamin Council, Sr. (ca.1807-1877), who likely inherited the land from his father, Jordan Council, Sr. (1769-1838)."

Member Watkins referred to the first paragraph and the second sentence and suggested that the word "intermarried" be changed to "inter-related".

Member Watkins referred to the first paragraph and the second sentence and pointed out that the families were not enslaved; they were slaves, and the family-owned them. He added that the Black people were captured and turned into slaves. He stated that it denotes a false idea. Chair Plaag disagreed with Member Watkins because many in the Black community have commented for three decades that the term "slave," when continued to be used to describe individuals, is an objectifying word; it suggests it is morally correct for the slaves to have been regarded as property. He said it normalizes and validates the slave trade and practice in the United States to continue to describe them as slaves. He added that any of those who owned people whether they bought them in a slave market or they were born to people, they were already enslaved and made a slave. He said that it was a choice that those people chose to enslave people either through purchase or through the births that attended to those they had purchased. Member Watkins responded that Chair Plaag was describing a fine splitting of hairs. He added that we are offended by slavery or offended by the fact that people had slaves and it was legal. He did not think that the owners of the slaves enslaved them. After this discussion, Member Watkins still thought the language was inaccurate about the term "enslaved." Student Member Ziegler suggested to say, "as well as enslaved people owned by these families prior to the American War Civil War."

Mayor Pro-Tem Tugman left the meeting at approximately 4:50 p.m.

Member Watkins referred to the first paragraph and the last sentence that read "with Blacks buried in the section to the east and Whites buried in the section to the west." He asked Chair Plaag if he wanted to repeat that phraseology or if he would want to variate it to read, "Blacks buried in the section to the east while Whites were interred in the western part of the cemetery." Chair Plaag explained it was written that way to keep it in a parallel structure.

Member Smyth pointed out the technical difference between "burial" and "interment." He suggested using the term "burial" because, in general, there might be some people that are cremated. He said the literature that he had read referred to the term "enslaved." He said he was comfortable using either the term "enslaved by these families" or "other enslaved people owned by these families." Chair Plaag suggested using "as well as enslaved people owned by these families before the American Civil War." Member Smyth noted that it was important to say who owned the land and when they owned it to show that the Town of Boone did not always own it. He said the text should include the Council family because they owned the land. Vice-Chair Bond suggested leaving out Benjamin Council, Sr. Member Watkins stated his concern for leaving out Benjamin Council, Sr. was because there was no linking between the association with the Council family and the cemetery. He said that Jordan Council Sr. gave the land to Benjamin Council Sr. He said he did not know why we would want to include that information in the text.

Chair Plaag changed the first paragraph and the second sentence to read, "The land for the Boone Cemetery is historically associated with the Council family since the early 19th century."

Member Smyth asked Chair Plaag if there was any information on the first burials. Chair Plaag replied there was no information on them. He explained that Jordan Council's will portions his land among his children to his male children in equal shares. He said the will did not state which portion of land went to

which child. He said the earliest burial records that he knows of are the Todd family members that date back to the 1850s. He talked about their headstones being carved the same as their relative's headstones from the 20th Century.

Member Smyth referred to the first paragraph and the second sentence and asked what the earliest burials would be associated with the Council families. Vice-Chair Bond suggested using the term "mid-19th Century." Member Smyth said that using the time period would give some idea as to when the land was first used as a cemetery. Chair Plaag suggested changing the text to read, "the earliest burials were likely Councils and others from interrelated families as well as enslaved people owned by these families prior to the American Civil War." Chair Plaag confirmed consensus from the HPC on the revisions to Panel 1: Boone Cemetery draft discussed at this meeting.

Chair Plaag asked Ms. Mitchell if the Town Council needed to approve the Staff adding a subpage on the Town website to add the current draft of the Boone Cemetery Interpretative Panels for feedback. Ms. Mitchell responded that the Staff could go ahead and add the subpage, based on the process for other HPC topics that Staff has added in the past. Chair Plaag said he would incorporate the proposed changes to the draft document and send it to Ms. Mitchell.

Discussion ensued on Panel 2: Chair Plaag stated that he had not prepared any changes to this panel. He referred to packet pages 94 and 95 and asked Member Smyth to share his thoughts. Member Smyth said that he did not have the perspective to propose changes to the cemetery panel and wanted the JHA's input on what text should go onto this cemetery panel. Chair Plaag said the best way to handle this was to communicate with everyone who had given oral or written public comment either in the Town Council or the HPC meetings and let them know the communications are posted online. Member Smyth asked if the HPC could take a proactive approach and instead of the HPC revising the text, they could ask the JHA what important information they want to see on their cemetery panel.

Chair Plaag referred to packet page 94, and noted that he had minor word changes to Member Smyth's recommendation for the proposed cemetery panel text. He suggested changing the word "boundary" to "fence line" in the first sentence. In the second sentence, he suggested changing the word "South" to "United States." He pointed out that the information in the fourth sentence had been a contention point for some commentators. Chair Plaag stated that the information in the fourth sentence was accurate based on the archival record and the aerial photos. At the end of the fourth sentence, Chair Plaag suggested adding the following sentence, "On at least two occasions, once in the 1890s and the other in the 1950s, local leaders erected a fence that separated the two sections and fully enclosed the white section." Member Watkins said to Chair Plaag that the additional sentence had a lot of detail. Chair Plaag noted that it was important to him from a historical context standpoint and to the Junaluska Community to clarify that the division was still evident. Chair Plaag suggested changing the fifth sentence, "In 1958, town officials took over maintenance of the still privately owned west section." Chair Plaag referred to packet page 95 and stated that he agreed with the wording in the second sentence. Member Smyth referred to the third sentence and noted that he did not know how many unmarked graves are in the cemetery because grass has grown over the fieldstones. He noted that for a future project, he would like to see the fieldstones be uncovered. Chair Plaag suggested that in the third sentence, instead of giving a specific number, it should include "Typical of the more than," with the appropriate number he would need to count possibly 250 or 300, and the HPC could use Mr. Chris Miller's, GIS Specialist, previous survey where he geo-located the actual stones. He noted a few additional burials there that do not have stones. He said the text should be flexible on the number of unmarked graves and include "in the White section to the west."

Chair Plaag agreed the third sentence should read, "Typical of the 'x' known burials in the White section to the west are graves marked by a headstone bearing the names, relevant dates, and often an epitaph of the deceased." Chair Plaag suggested adding the following words to the third sentence: "Relatively few grave sites in this section remain unmarked."

Chair Plaag suggested the fourth sentence read, "In the Black section of the cemetery to the east, there are four surviving gravestones, as most burials were either marked with a fieldstone or other temporary marker."

Chair Plaag suggested that the fifth sentence read, "In 2016, a ground penetrating radar survey identified nearly 200 unmarked graves. Unable to identify these to a particular person, each was marked by a flat field stone. The names of those buried here are recorded on the large memorial marker installed by the Junaluska Heritage Association in 2017." He also suggested using the aerial photo from 1950.

Ms. Mitchell clarified that it was the desire of the HPC to, at some point, add the revised draft for the second cemetery panel to the Town website. Chair Plaag replied yes, unless there was a concern from one of the HPC members. Member Watkins said he would like to see the revisions to the draft cemetery panels be completed in paragraph form. He wanted to see the total word count, and he thought the text in both cemetery panels should be about the same length. Member Smyth said they could be the same length, but he thought it was optional depending on how much someone wanted to say.

Ms. Mitchell pointed out that throughout this process, she had kept track of everyone who had attended the meetings and given public comment. She had communicated with them primarily via email. She asked the HPC if they wanted her to contact the JHA members separately that had previously contacted her. Chair Plaag clarified to ensure to include them in addition to the other commentators.

Vice-Chair Bond expressed her discomfort in some of the statements made during public comment that the community did not know that the HPC had been discussing the proposed text for the cemetery interpretative panels. Student Member Ziegler expressed her thoughts regarding some of the statements made during public comment; she said the most the HPC can do is put up multiple notices in various places to get the word out about the HPC discussing the proposed text for the said panels. She added that doing a media blitz financially did not make sense for this situation.

Ms. Mitchell said that while working with all of the public requests in September and October, she thought social media would be the easiest. She said the one thing she left out was doing a press release. Ms. Shook stated that a press release is by choice of the media provider that publishes, and they do not always publish the request.

Member Watkins asked for a recap of the most important things that should be included on the second cemetery panel. He stated that the HPC has determined that the ground penetrating radar was important. Discussion by members ensued to include the monument that was installed by the JHA and the date it was installed, a fence distinguishing the area, and that the Black section was not properly maintained like the White section was maintained. Chair Plaag read from Member Smyth's document the paragraph, "Slavery may have formerly ended in 1865, but racial segregation in the cemetery did not. In the Century that followed, locals usually called the cemetery's east section the colored cemetery and the west section the city cemetery." Member Watkins said that was an important statement because racial discrimination continued. Chair Plaag said if some words needed to be removed, they could be taken from the second sentence of what they called the cemetery.

Ms. Mitchell confirmed that she would wait for Chair Plaag to send her the revised draft cemetery panel text, and then she would enter it on the Town website. She told the HPC that she would work on making a subpage for the draft cemetery panels and the public feedback form.

Ms. Mitchell explained to the HPC that the October 24, 2023, Comprehensive Plan meeting they were invited to was not mandatory; she said the Staff left it open to any HPC member who could attend it. She noted that a hybrid format for the meeting would be available to any HPC member to attend the meeting. Chair Plaag and Student Member Ziegler stated that they could attend the meeting.

Ms. Shook asked about the deadline for the responses since the Staff has to make a form. Chair Plaag suggested the deadline be at noon on November 3, 2023. Ms. Mitchell said the meeting packet would be posted on October 31, 2023, but the Staff could adjust it to November 3, 2023, to include any responses that might come in.

OTHER DISCUSSION

Vice-Chair Bond announced that on Wednesday, October 18, 2023, at 5:30 p.m., the Watauga County Historical Society will meet at the Watauga County Library, and their guest speaker, Mr. Michael Hardy, would speak on "Benjamin Cleveland".

ADJOURNMENT

Student Member Ziegler made a motion, seconded by Member Smyth, to adjourn the meeting at 5:25 p.m.

Vote: Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Eric Plaag, Chair

Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary