

**TOWN COUNCIL AND PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING AND PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, APRIL 27, 2026, 6:00 PM
1500 BLOWING ROCK ROAD AND WEBEX**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Dalton George, Mayor Pro Tem Todd Carter (via WebEx), Anne Pruitt, Virginia Roseman, and Adrian Tait

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Frank Venio, Declan King, and Frida Paz-Miranda

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Garrett Kight, and Michael Mileski

PLANNING STAFF PRESENT: Jane Shook-Director of Planning & Inspections, Brandon Wise-Deputy Director of Planning & Inspections, Jessica Mitchell-Advanced Planning Specialist, and Brenda Henson-Board Clerk

OTHER TOWN STAFF OR REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT: Dale Presnell-Interim Town Manager, and Allison Meade-Town Attorney (via WebEx)

Call to Order

Mayor George called the Town Council to order at 6:08 p.m. Chair Venio called the Planning Commission to order at the same time. The meeting was held at the Town Council Chambers, located at 1500 Blowing Rock Road, Boone, and via WebEx.

Moment of Silence

A moment of silence was observed.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Council Member Roseman made a motion, seconded by Council Member Tait, to approve the March 16, March 23, and April 8, 2026, Public Hearing/Planning Commission meeting minutes.

VOTE: Aye – 4
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Commission Member King wished to change the word “access” to “axis” in condition #3, page 9 of the March 16, 2026, Planning Commission meeting minutes. He then made a motion to approve the March 16, 2026, meeting minutes as amended, and the March 23 and April 8, 2026, meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commission Member Paz-Miranda.

VOTE: Aye – 3
Nay – 0
Absent – 2 (Kight, Mileski)

The motion passed.

PUBLIC HEARING

Case A26-0127 Public Art in Local Historic District – UDO Text Amendment

A text amendment to UDO Articles 26, 34, and Appendix D to modify and clarify the standards for public art, including murals, in the Downtown Boone local historic district.

Jessica Mitchell, Advanced Planning Specialist, presented the request. She noted that the topic was initially discussed with the Town Council in November 2025, and the text had since been presented to the Historic Preservation Commission and Town Council earlier this month. As a result of those presentations, additional clarifications were made and were reflected in the staff report.

Ms. Mitchell outlined the proposed changes to UDO Articles 26, 34, and Appendix D. She noted that ghost signs would be moved from the public art section of Appendix D to the sign section and that the section would include guidance on restoring and preserving them.

Ms. Mitchell referred to the table in Section 11.03.04 and stated that landmark properties were included as a property classification type. She noted that the table did not reference murals on panels and suggested adding language stating that murals may be installed on panels or similar materials, on painted or unpainted walls, and attached through the mortar joints, in accordance with the installation standards in Section 11.03 and applicable to all property types.

Ms. Mitchell referred to language in the table that murals should use vapor-permeable paints to allow the underlying facade material to breathe and avoid trapping moisture. She noted that the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application would be modified to include language to streamline the process for public art and mural COA applications.

Council Member Roseman stated that it was nice to see this text because it would add cultural and visual interest to the historic district and, hopefully, tell the community's story.

Council Member Tait asked how existing murals would fit within these standards, with respect to the surfaces on which they were painted and their elevations. Ms. Mitchell replied that existing murals would remain, and if repairs were needed, current standards would apply. Council Member Tait stated that, regarding the elevation definitions, the primary facade, the main entrance, and the front of the building could be challenging because the primary façade might not be where the main entrance or the front of the building is. Ms. Mitchell noted that the proposed text was specifically in Appendix D and applied only to the historic district. Jane Shook, Director of Planning & Inspections, added that the definitions of primary, secondary, and tertiary differed from those related to primary facades and building orientation in other areas of the UDO. She noted that issues related to building orientation were on the staff's work plan to be addressed sooner rather than later.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter wished to clarify that the requirement that murals be installed only on smooth surfaces also included brick. He asked about anti-graffiti coating. Ms. Mitchell stated that anti-graffiti coating would have to be vapor-permeable. She noted that she had contacted the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), which recommended two different products for graffiti cleaners, one for painted and one for unpainted masonry, that staff needed to research further. Ms. Mitchell explained that SHPO recommended cleaning, then monitoring the building before applying an anti-graffiti coating. If the building was retagged, it should be cleaned, then the vapor-permeable anti-graffiti coating should be applied. She noted that this type of coating would come off when cleaned, so the coating would have to be reapplied. Although the vapor-permeable coating would not adhere to the masonry, there was an expectation that graffiti would not penetrate the building's surface.

Chair Veno asked whether the Planning Commission needed to include language in their recommendation regarding murals on panels. Ms. Mitchell felt that would be appropriate.

Council Member Tait asked how the scale of art installations, such as sculptures, would be determined. Ms. Mitchell replied that the Historic Preservation Commission would determine the appropriateness of scale and whether the art would distract from the building or its surroundings. Council Member Tait asked

whether anyone was waiting for this text so that murals could be installed. Ms. Mitchell replied that at least one COA application was awaiting approval of the mural text.

Mayor George invited public comment.

Amber Bateman, on behalf of the Watauga Arts Council, expressed her gratitude for all of the work everyone had done to make this text amendment possible. She supported the planning principles and goals in Boone Next, specifically Goal 1.7, A Creative and Artistic Town; Goal 3.4, Innovation Through the Arts, Culture and Creativity; and Goal 4.1, The Local Governance that Implements the Community Vision. Ms. Bateman stated that the ordinance and the updates more clearly defined how public art could live and thrive in the historic district and the greater Boone area. She noted that they hoped to extend the Hellbender mural into a nearby blank area where graffiti was an issue. She added that she was also working with the Downtown Boone Development Association to potentially place more cameras downtown.

Mayor George closed the public comment portion of this hearing.

Council Member Tait asked what would happen if someone wanted to put up a mural in another part of town. Ms. Mitchell replied that they would have to apply for a zoning permit and comply with the UDO, including the language in Article 26 regarding murals.

With nothing further, Mayor George closed the public hearing for this case at 6:46 p.m.

Case A26-0125 Legislative Changes – UDO Text Amendment

A text amendment to UDO Articles 1, 4, 7, 9, and 34 to reflect recent legislative changes from the 2025 North Carolina General Assembly session.

Ms. Mitchell stated that this text amendment was necessary to make the UDO consistent with the legislative changes. Changes included the removal of waiting periods for resubmittals of zoning map or text amendments, development applications, or requests for development approval after withdrawn or denied applications; modifications to split jurisdictions; and the allowance of reconstruction of nonconforming residential structures until June 2030.

There was no public comment.

With nothing further, Mayor George closed the public hearing for this case at 6:49 p.m.

Case A24-0077 Transportation Impact Analysis – UDO Text Amendment

A text amendment to UDO Article 4 and Appendix C to modify transportation impact analysis (TIA) provisions. Modifications include changes to process, content, and mitigation.

Ms. Shook explained that she placed this item on the agenda to allow for questions that might have arisen from a meeting she, Todd Moody, Public Works Director, and Allison Meade had regarding the proposed TIA text language. However, no questions arose, and she anticipated bringing this text amendment before the Council and Planning Commission at the May public hearing. Town Council and Planning Commission members agreed to table this case until the May public hearing.

Reschedule May 25, 2026, Public Hearing/Planning Commission Meeting

Ms. Shook stated that the regular May Public Hearing/Planning Commission meeting fell on Memorial Day and would need to be rescheduled. She suggested rescheduling to May 18, 2026. Council members indicated they could attend on May 18, with Council Member Tait needing to attend via WebEx. Planning Commission members indicated they could attend on that date.

Adjournment of Town Council

Mayor George adjourned the Town Council at 6:53 p.m.

Dalton George, Mayor

Brenda Henson, Board Clerk

Frank Venno, Planning Commission Chair

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Chair Venno called a break in the meeting from 6:53 p.m. until 6:59 p.m.

Discussion and Recommendation on Case(s) Heard at the Public Hearing

Case A26-0127 Public Art in Local Historic District – UDO Text Amendment

A text amendment to UDO Articles 26, 34, and Appendix D to modify and clarify the standards for public art, including murals, in the Downtown Boone local historic district.

Ms. Mitchell reminded Commission members that language needed to be included in the proposed table in Section 11.03.04, stating that murals on panels may be installed on painted or unpainted walls through the mortar joints on secondary or tertiary elevations, and that they must follow the standards in Section 11.03 for installation.

Vote 1

Commission Member King made a motion that the proposed amendment to the Town's Unified Development Ordinance is consistent with the Town's current comprehensive plan and any other adopted plan(s) of the Town that are applicable because of the following from Boone Next:

Planning Principle 11: Continue to preserve and enhance Boone's historic buildings and places.

Policy 1.3.1: Support Preservation of Historic Properties and Districts: Support identification, stewardship, and preservation of historic and culturally valuable properties and Boone's historic districts, including features of both the private and the public realm.

Policy 3.4.3: Incorporate Art into Public and Private Projects: Support public art in public infrastructure projects. Incorporate public art into new development projects of a certain size. Promote hiring of local artists for public art in public and private projects.

Commission Member King added that language still needed to be included in the text that murals on panels may be installed on painted or unpainted walls through the mortar joints on secondary or tertiary elevations, and must follow the standards in Section 11.03.

Chair Venno wished to add:

Goal 1.7: A Creative and Artistic Town: Boone leverages the arts and supports creative public places and spaces within its physical built environment.

Goal 4.1: Local Governance that Implements the Community's Vision: Local government is easy to understand, navigate, and engage with. Local policies and actions advance the long-term best interests of the community.

Commission Member Paz-Miranda wished to add:

Planning Principle 6: Continue supporting Downtown Boone's vibrant mix of businesses, residences, retail, restaurant, entertainment, and civic uses, while preserving its cherished distinctive human-scale character.

Commission Member King accepted the amendments. Commission Member Paz-Miranda seconded the motion.

VOTE: Aye – 3
Nay – 0
Absent – 2 (Kight, Mileski)

The motion passed.

Vote 2

Commission Member King made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Paz-Miranda, that the Planning Commission recommends approval of Ordinance #A26-0127 within Exhibit A and approval is reasonable and in the public interest because this amendment clarifies legal standards around murals, which is productive for business and property owners within the historic district.

VOTE: Aye – 3
Nay – 0
Absent – 2 (Kight, Mileski)

The motion passed.

Case A26-0125 Legislative Changes – UDO Text Amendment

A text amendment to UDO Articles 1, 4, 7, 9, and 34 to reflect recent legislative changes from the 2025 North Carolina General Assembly session.

Vote 1

Commission Member King made a motion that the proposed amendment to the Town's Unified Development Ordinance is consistent with the Town's current comprehensive plan and any other adopted plan(s) of the Town that are applicable because of the following from Boone Next:

Policy 4.1.1: Continued Excellence in Transparency: Continue to make governance and government decision-making accessible and transparent to all residents.

Policy 4.1.4: Accessible and Understandable Documentation: Seek to make key Town documents, such as the annual budget and the capital improvements program, user-friendly and accessible to the general public.

The motion was seconded by Commission Member Paz-Miranda.

VOTE: Aye – 3
Nay – 0
Absent – 2 (Kight, Mileski)

The motion passed.

Vote 2

Commission Member King made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Paz-Miranda, that the Planning Commission recommends approval of Ordinance #A26-0125 within Exhibit A and approval is reasonable and in the public interest because this amendment brings town law into adherence to the state law.

VOTE: Aye – 3
Nay – 0
Absent – 2 (Kight, Mileski)

The motion passed.

Case A24-0077 Transportation Impact Analysis – UDO Text Amendment

A text amendment to UDO Article 4 and Appendix C to modify transportation impact analysis provisions. Modifications include changes to process, content, and mitigation.

This case was tabled until the May 18, 2026, Public Hearing/Planning Commission meeting.

Other Matters

Planning Commission Vice-Chair

Ms. Mitchell stated that an application was included in the meeting packet and noted that the Planning Commission vice-chair position was open to any Planning Commission member who was interested. The completed application must be sent to the Board Clerk for inclusion in the May meeting packet. At the May 18 meeting, the Planning Commission would nominate a vice-chair, and that recommendation would be forwarded to the Town Council for their final selection.

Ms. Mitchell noted that there were currently two vacant positions on the Planning Commission.

Adjournment of Planning Commission

Commission Member King made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m. Chair Veno seconded the motion.

VOTE: Aye – 3
Nay – 0
Absent – 2 (Kight, Mileski)

The motion passed.

Frank Veno, Planning Commission Chair

Brenda Henson, Board Clerk