

**BOONE TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
DOWNTOWN PLANNING PROJECTS - PUBLIC INPUT SESSION #1
TUESDAY, MAY 11, 2021 at 6:00 P.M.
VIA WEBEX SOFTWARE**

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Mayor Rennie Brantz, Mayor Pro Tem Connie Ulmer, Sam Furgiuele, Nancy LaPlaca, and Virginia Roseman

COMMUNITY APPEARANCE COMMISSION: Sarah-Davis Cagle, Vice-Chair

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION: Chair Eric Plaag, Bettie Bond and Chuck Watkins

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS: Chris Behrend, Amanda Halbert, John Tippet, Frank Veno and Adam Zebzda

PLANNING STAFF PRESENT: Jane Shook, Director of Planning and Inspections, Brian Johnson, Urban Design Specialist, Christy Turner, Senior Planner, Mike James, Senior Planner, Brenda Henson, Administrative Support Specialist, Stacey Miller, Chief Building Inspector, Matt McGregor Staff Intern and Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary

OTHER TOWN STAFF AND REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:

OTHER ATTENDEES/PARTICIPANTS VIA WEBEX: Kayla Lasure, Watauga Democrat and Dave Greer, Citizen

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Brantz called the special meeting of the Boone Town Council to order at 6:02 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

Downtown Planning Projects Presentation

Ms. Shook announced that this is the first of three Public Input Sessions on the Downtown Planning Projects. She explained that the other two Public Input Sessions are scheduled for Wednesday, May 19, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. and on Thursday, May 27, 2021 at 6 p.m. She noted that at the end of the presentations, we will review additional ways in which the public can provide input on these projects and to hear from the public who have joined this meeting.

Ms. Shook introduced the Council, Board members and Staff who were present. She stated that Mr. Johnson would present the B1 Downtown Expansion project and then Ms. Turner would present the Downtown Boone Local Historic District project.

Mr. Johnson explained that he and Ms. Turner will be presenting two different processes in their presentations. Mr. Johnson encouraged everyone to let he or Ms. Turner know if there are any questions on the information presented on the two work products because though they interact with each other, they are separate work products.

Mr. Johnson went over the presentation on the B-1 Downtown Expansion Project that is located in the presentation (permanently on file).

Ms. Turner went over the presentation on the Downtown Boone Local Historic District that is located in the presentation (permanently on file). Ms. Turner also noted more information of the Historic Preservation Commission can be found at the new Commission's new website (www.boonehpc.com).

Mr. Johnson concluded the presentation with information on how the B1 Downtown Expansion project and the Downtown Boone Local Historic District would work together, as outlined in the meeting packet.

Upon conclusion of the presentation, Ms. Shook went over the Town of Boone Downtown Planning Projects website at www.townofboonedowntownplanningprojects.com and highlighted the information and public input opportunities on the website.

Public Input

Ms. Shook stated she had a request for an invitation to join the meeting from Tommy Ballas and Lisa Currie. Neither were not present on the meeting.

Ms. Shook called on the members of the public were in attendance at the meeting. Of those present, only Dave Greer noted he was on the call to just listen to the presentation.

Ms. Shook went over the different methods Planning Staff had created to disseminate information to the public to get public feedback on the said information. She said in addition to the Downtown Boone Planning Projects website, the Planning Staff had mailed almost 500 postcards to property owners within the project boundary and within 150 feet of the proposed boundaries. She said that the Planning Staff intends to hand deliver postcards to business owners and a press release has been sent to the normal media sources, the Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Boone Development Association.

Ms. Shook also noted that the www.townofboonedowntownplanningprojects.com website has received 160 unique visitors and 603 views as of this meeting date and two appointments have been scheduled through the website.

Ms. Shook read aloud the feedback from two people. The first one was Lindsey Marshall regarding the B1 Downtown Expansion project. Ms. Marshall wrote:

“Please do this. Boone needs to grow by opportunities for new local businesses that benefit the current residents and the tourist industry. It’s time for Boone to grow up a bit and this is the way to do it”.

The second person was Courtney Cornelius regarding the B1 Downtown Expansion project. Ms. Cornelius wrote:

“At the very least the downtown area needs to be expanded. Boone is growing and we need a downtown that reflects this progress. As so many charming towns have shown, there is a way to maintain the *magic* while also offering more for locals and tourists alike. I live in the neighborhood behind Council Street and we regularly talk about how great for the community it would be if the downtown became more of a hub for daily life within a small trip you can do on a Saturday. Not only do we need incentives to keep our local dollars in the community (instead of online shopping...) but more offerings will attract tourists and bolster our existing small businesses.”

Planning Commission Member Frank Veno asked if the Boone Chamber will comment on the Downtown Planning projects. Ms. Shook said that the Planning Staff did not know if the Chamber would comment but noted that they were included in the press release.

Council Member Sam Furguele also commented on Planning Commission Member Frank Veno’s question to Ms. Shook. He explained that the Boone Chamber lead an effort to develop what started out to be a “Small Business Rescue Plan” for the Downtown area. He said the DBDA did not show much interest in it. He said the Boone Chamber put together a committee to examine Downtown policies and operations to try to remove obstacles to help businesses succeed in the Downtown area.

Ms. Shook said that she is a part of the Downtown Boone Advocacy Committee and she has kept them updated on the progress of the Downtown Planning Projects. She said that David Jackson, Executive Director of the Boone Chamber is getting close to presenting to Council the committee’s initial findings.

Ms. Shook asked if there was anyone else attending this virtual meeting that wanted to speak or ask questions or give comments on the proposed two work projects. She asked for feedback on the presentations given at this meeting to help the Planning Staff improve upon their current work.

ADJOURNMENT

Council Member LaPlaca made a motion, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ulmer to adjourn the special meeting at 7:05 p.m.

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

Rennie Brantz, Mayor

Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary