

**BOONE TOWN COUNCIL
DOWNTOWN PLANNING PROJECTS - PUBLIC INPUT SESSION #2
WEDNESDAY, MAY 19, 2021, 9:00 A.M.
VIA WEBEX SOFTWARE**

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Mayor Rennie Brantz-Mayor, Sam Furguele, Dustin Hicks, Nancy LaPlaca, and Virginia Roseman

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION: Chair Eric Plaag, Chuck Watkins

COMMUNITY APPEARANCE COMMISSION: Vice-Chair Sarah-Davis Cagle

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS: Amanda Halbert

PLANNING STAFF PRESENT: Jane Shook-Director of Planning and Inspections, Christy Turner-Senior Planner, Brian Johnson-Urban Design Specialist, and Brenda Henson-Board Secretary

OTHER TOWN STAFF AND REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT: Lane Moody, Downtown Coordinator

OTHER ATTENDEES/PARTICIPANTS VIA WEBEX: George Antczak, Mike Forrester, Joe Furman, Jim Marsh, Michelle Novacek, Michael Vetro, Jim Marsh, Tucker Deal, Laura Kratt, and George Antczak

Call to Order

Mayor Brantz called the special meeting of the Boone Town Council to order at 9:04 a.m. and welcomed everyone.

Downtown Planning Projects Presentation

Ms. Shook stated that today's meeting was the second of three opportunities for the scheduled public input sessions with the third session being scheduled for next Thursday at 6pm. Ms. Shook introduced the 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).

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 Lisa Curry. Ms. Curry was not present on the meeting.

Ms. Shook asked George Antczak if he had any public input he would like to share. Mr. Antczak stated he was the technical director at the Appalachian Theater and was just sitting in to gather information for Laura Kratt. He stated they were interested in getting information about the timetable and the scope of the project as it affected Howard Street and their loading zone. Ms. Shook replied that this project would not have an impact on the Howard Street project, noting that project was being handled independently through Town Hall. She stated that Ms. Turner could contact him and coordinate the information with him.

Ms. Shook asked Jim Marsh if he would like to speak. Mr. Marsh felt the information presented was very helpful. He stated he looked after the Daniel Boone Condos and was on the Downtown Committee.

Ms. Shook then recognized Michelle Novacek. Ms. Novacek stated she worked for the University and was concerned about University properties that were included in these proposals. She suggested the possibility of considering some sort of university zoning because they were not exactly B1. Ms. Novacek also noted that the DBDA sponsored some art with the purpose being to make Downtown more vibrant and interesting for tourists. She stated that the art was not necessarily historical in nature and asked how the art would be affected by the historic overlay. Ms. Shook replied that she would make a note about the University properties for further discussion and asked either Chair Plaag or Ms. Turner to address the question about art.

Chair Plaag explained that art installations that were done Downtown were temporary installations and they did not alter an existing building. He stated, in terms of streetscapes and landscapes, due to their temporary nature, they were designed to be removable. Chair Plaag stated he did not believe there were any permanent art installations in Downtown, other than perhaps the war memorial, and he was not aware of any proposals to establish new permanent art installations in Downtown. In the event that there was a proposal for a permanent addition of an art installation, that request would have to come before the HPC for review, but in the case of temporary art installations, that would likely be exempt. Chair Plaag noted that an exemption may need to be added in the Design Standards that exempted art installations on existing art installation sites so they would not have to go through the COA process. Chair Plaag asked Ms. Novacek which University property she had in mind because his understanding was that the zoning expansion would not change the original university zoning. Ms. Shook added that an attempt was made to avoid all the University properties in this project however, she thought the Historic District did include one University property but her understanding was that the State was not subject to overlay districts.

Chair Plaag asked Ms. Novacek if there were specific properties of concern and she replied that there were several properties of concern and stated they may not be zoned correctly to start with because they were University owned.

Council Member Furgiuele stated that even if there was a change in the parameters, the University would be grandfathered for the properties that were being used for university purposes unless the use was stopped or the University divested itself of the properties and they went into private ownership.

Ms. Novacek referred to the Boone mural located on the side of the building on Depot Street and stated there were some other murals that the DBDA would like to do. She asked if the murals would be considered temporary in nature and asked how temporary was defined. Ms. Novacek stated that the murals would not be painted on the buildings but would be in a way that they would be attached to the buildings, much like the Downtown mural. She stated the DBDA felt it might be a way to increase tourism by creating Instagrammable backdrops that people could stand in front of for photos and let people know that they were in Boone having a great time. Chair Plaag replied that modifying or affixing something to an historic building would be reviewable by the HPC under a COA process and signage requirements may apply as well.

Ms. Novacek asked if the intent for the Historic District was to freeze Downtown at 1964 so that everything that happened there should look like it's between 1918 and 1964. Chair Plaag replied that was not the intent at all. He stated what was intended was to encourage preservation of existing buildings, adaptive reuse of existing buildings that preserved defining historic features, and permit and encourage new construction that would be compatible with the existing construction in the district. Chair Plaag stated it was never the intent of preservation to freeze time, unless you were doing a true restoration project and those kinds of true restoration projects were very rare in the preservation world. He noted that from local historic districts to national register districts, there typically was an attempt to preserve the defining character features of a district while at the same time making sure that a new construction was compatible with existing structures.

Ms. Shook then asked if Michael Vetro had any comments and there was no reply.

Ms. Shook asked Mike Forrester if he had any comments. Mr. Forrester asked about the timeline for implementation. Ms. Shook replied that the intent was to obtain public input during the month of May once all the public input was gathered the four boards would meet in early June to discuss next steps so there was no definitive timeline at this moment. She stated that the website would be kept up to date on the next steps, letting people know the time frame as it was decided.

Council Member Furgiuele added that the proposed changes would go through the normal process of the UDO and would eventually go, in whatever form or way it may be changed, to a public hearing, then Planning Commission will make recommendations, and then Town Council would vote to approve or deny the projects. He noted that Town Council asked that there be an attempt to conclude the process before the end of the year because there would be a new Town Council seated in December and this Town Council had been part of the discussion for the last couple of years.

Ms. Shook reminded everyone that this meeting was just for public input and was not the public hearing. She noted that one on one meetings with planning staff were being offered and several of those had taken place.

Mr. Marsh stated they were doing some renovations at Daniel Boone Condos and as part of that they asked to update the handrails with wire but were told that they did not conform with the Jones House, which was next door. Mr. Marsh asked if the Jones House was going to be the standard throughout the whole district. Ms. Shook explained that currently the Town ordinances for the Downtown area for the existing B1 Central Business district had design standards that were modeled off of the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation for Historic Properties. She stated that the request Mr. Marsh made to change to a more contemporary handrail was not in compliance with the current standards that required the use of a material that was on the building or on a building on an adjoining property. Ms. Shook noted that the Daniel Boone Condos would not be within the proposed historic district so they would just be following the requirements that were in the underlying B1 Downtown Core zoning.

Ms. Shook then asked Tucker Deal if he had any comments. Mr. Deal stated he was a Downtown resident, he worked Downtown, and had previously been on the DBDA. He stated he appreciated the information sessions. Mr. Deal asked for clarification on how this would affect R3 properties that were being rezoned in the Interface district. He stated that renovations for some of those multifamily properties because some of the newer standards was going to require commercial windows on the ground floor and other things of that nature. Mr. Deal stated that the buildings would be non-conforming due to the change in standards. Ms. Shook replied that legally non-conforming uses could continue to be used as long as the use was not interrupted. She explained that buildings built prior to 50 years ago would be considered historic but if a building did not qualify as historic the standards for new construction would be applied and the construction still had to be sympathetic to those historic properties. Ms. Shook stated that was the intent of the Design Standards. She stated she had heard from someone with concerns about multi-

family properties along Green Street that would be placed in the B1 Downtown Interface district. Ms. Shook noted that the concern was that those properties were fully residential and any changes made on those properties would cause them to have to be brought into compliance. She provided the example of the building being burned down and the property owner not being able to build back in time to meet the requirements in Article 7. Ms. Shook stated one of the concerns she heard was would the property owner then have to put commercial on the ground floor to rebuild the residential portion when they were Green Street away from the Downtown area. Mr. Deal stated there were several other properties running up West King Street that were, at present, wholly multi-family. Ms. Shook replied that normal maintenance and repair was allowed for non-conforming uses so if the project was made non-conforming as a result of the rezoning, the provisions of Article 7 would apply.

Ms. Shook reminded everyone of the next and last scheduled public input session was scheduled for next Thursday at 6 pm. She stated that all of the comments from the website and individual meetings with staff as well as the minutes of all the public input sessions would be presented to the Town Council, the Planning Commission, the Community Appearance Commission, and the Historic Preservation Commission in early June for their review.

Adjournment

By consensus, Mayor Brantz adjourned the meeting at 10:08 a.m.

Rennie Brantz, Mayor

Brenda Henson, Board Secretary