

**MINUTES – SPECIAL MEETING
BOONE TOWN COUNCIL
October 11, 2016**

CALL TO ORDER

Council Members Present: Mayor Rennie Brantz, Mayor Pro-Tem Lynne Mason, Charlotte Mizelle, Jeannine Underdown Collins, Jennifer Teague and Loretta Clawson

Community Appearance Commission Members Present: Chairperson Brian Williams, Claudine Lovins, Jason Selong and Sarah Davis Cagle

Historic Preservation Commission Members Present: Chairperson Eric Plaag, Bettie Bond, Teresa Pearman, Bill Dixon and Judith Phoenix

Staff Present: Bill Bailey-Director of Planning and Inspections, Jane Shook-Planning Supervisor, Brian Johnson-Urban Design Specialist and Marlene Crosby-Board Secretary

Others Present: Pilar Fotta-Director of Cultural Resources, Virginia Falck-Downtown Boone Development Coordinator and Caroline Buck, Planning and Inspections Department Intern

Mayor Brantz called the workshop to order at 5:32 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 11, 2016, in the Council Chambers located at 1500 Blowing Rock Road.

Mayor Rennie Brantz welcomed everyone to the workshop and turned the workshop over to Mr. Bill Bailey, Director of the Planning and Inspections Department.

Mr. Bailey explained the goal of this workshop is to ask for advice and direction from the Council on the draft guidelines that will be presented at this workshop.

Mr. Bailey pointed out that the graphics in the draft guidelines were done by Caroline Buck the Planning and Inspections Department intern. He noted there is some new information in the draft guidelines that will be explained in the presentation. He also noted that the next step would be to get the draft guidelines into the public hearing cycle. Mr. Bailey introduced Mr. Brian Johnson, Urban Design Specialist who began the presentation on the draft guidelines.

ARTICLE 25 APPEARANCE STANDARDS - DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Mr. Johnson handed out a copy of the draft guidelines, two colored maps of the Downtown area and a PowerPoint presentation on the draft guidelines (permanently attached). Mr. Johnson explained to the Council that if they wanted to make notes on the PowerPoint presentation and return it to the Staff for their review.

Mr. Johnson began discussion on the Overall Design Objectives for Downtown Boone. He talked about the goals to preserve and restore historic buildings and future new construction of buildings in the Downtown area. He specifically asked what type of compromise is needed to preserve and restore buildings and allow new construction of buildings at the same time. He talked about developing a theme for the Downtown area. He noted that some people have said that they do not want Downtown Boone to look like the surrounding Towns. He said these are some things that the Staff needs direction on.

Mr. Johnson talked about the Boone 2030 Land Use Plan and the two colored maps that were handed out at this workshop. He said the blue and orange map has been overlaid with the Sector G-4 Downtown Framework Plan.

Mr. Johnson talked about the two colored zones shown on the map. He explained that the CAC members discussed what areas of the Town should be shown on the Downtown Historic Core and the Downtown Interface Area.

Mr. Johnson said the CAC members also talked about the locations of the natural gateways into the Downtown area. He said that he would like to ask the Council their thoughts on where the natural gateways should be and how far the Council would like to see the areas extended in the two zones shown on the colored map.

Mr. Johnson talked about the Comprehensive Plan and the need for a certain look or design for the Downtown area. He noted that there needs to be flexibility and affordability with the design.

Mr. Johnson said the blue color on the colored maps represents the main Downtown historic core. He said the orange color represents the area outside of the historic core. He said the CAC members felt the existing buildings in this area should also be preserved and provide a transition into the historic core.

Mr. Johnson pointed out that at this time the CAC members are calling the Downtown historic area a historic core and not a historic district.

Discussion ensued on the existing buildings outside the historic core not all being historic buildings.

Council Member Teague talked about allowing Howard Street to have a more modern feel because the survey noted that the community did not want all of the Downtown area to look historic.

HPC Chairperson Plaag said that he and Council Member Teague talked about Downtown buildings having a modern look. Council Member Teague noted that she liked a modern look to the PNC bank building. HPC Chairperson Plaag said the issue with a modern looking building is that in 40 years, it may not fit in with the other buildings around it. He said that this is one item that the HPC is working on to try to prevent this type of thing from happening.

HPC Member Dixon said he did not agree with HPC Chairperson Plaag because he feels it fits in with the other buildings around it.

CAC Member Lovins noted that there is an agreement that the King Street buildings need to look historic. She said we need direction on the look of Howard Street. HPC Member Dixon said he feels that Howard Street has some of the best historic looking buildings in Downtown Boone.

Council Member Clawson asked if Howard Street would be turned into a rent by the bedroom area. She said that she disagrees with this type of idea. CAC Chairperson Williams said the CAC has reviewed the design of the buildings rather than the use of the buildings.

Council Member Mizelle talked about the Turchin Center on King Street having a modern look and she feels it fits into Downtown Boone and it will look good in years to come. It was noted that the Turchin Center is a museum and the use may need to be considered as well as the look of the building.

Mr. Bailey explained about the infill between the other historic buildings and how the scale and density fit into the look of the buildings. He talked about capturing design elements in store fronts in renovation and new construction. He said the use of the buildings will be discussed at a future meeting.

Council Member Teague talked about the survey results from the community wanting 50 percent Historic look on King Street and 50 percent more modern look on Howard Street.

CAC Chairperson Williams said the CAC is proposing brick and stone as a building material in the Downtown Interface Area; because these materials will stand the test of time. He further talked about allowing for windows and architectural features that look more modern.

HPC Member Bond talked about a building being complimentary to the other buildings in the Downtown Historic Area. She talked about seeing a building with a glass reflective front that reflected the other buildings around it.

HPC Chairperson Plaag explained why Towns work to develop guidelines. He said other Town's include in their guidelines how to develop new modern construction and infill that is sympathetic. They do this by using certain building materials that do not look out of place.

Mr. Johnson talked about the survey results. He said 50 percent of the people wanted to preserve the history of Downtown Boone. He said people like the look of the buildings in the Downtown area; but what type of building is behind the building façade.

HPC Member Bond talked about the renovation of the Appalachian Theatre. She said the idea is that it will be brought back to the same way it looked in 1938.

Mr. Johnson said that the main goal is to identify and preserve the historic buildings in the two-colored areas.

Mr. Johnson talked about the look of the existing buildings in the historic core and how we want the future buildings to look.

Historic Preservation Commission Chairperson Eric Plaag talked about where the HPC is regarding the review of the HPC guidelines. He said he felt it would be helpful to try to align the two different sets of guidelines. He said this would benefit the developer to know which Commission to go to discuss future projects.

HPC Chairperson Plaag said the HPC members have identified the historic district along King Street to Appalachian Street to Howard Street and Queen Street and down to Water Street. He said there are historic buildings outside of this identified historic district. He talked about the style of buildings between Water Street and Straight Street making it a struggle for the HPC members to include this area in the historic district. He further talked about the buildings on the south side of King Street between Appalachian Street to College Street that do not fit into the historic element. He said the buildings located from Appalachian Street to Water Street can be included in the historic district.

Mr. Bailey said that the Staff is asking Council if it is appropriate to include the areas that are outside the historic core on the map, if the buildings are not necessarily historic. He also noted that some of the areas are subject to change from the historic core after the HPC members have completed their draft guidelines.

Discussion ensued on allowing flexibility for new construction and renovation to existing buildings. Mr. Johnson said we have identified the acceptable and prohibited building materials.

CAC Chairperson Williams talked about not tying the hands of the developers and allowing for flexibility. He said there is a possibility that we could miss out on a whole architectural period by prohibiting some building materials.

Mr. Hunter Coffey, Architect talked about historic recreation. He said it serves to undermine the true history that you are trying to preserve by mimicking it. He said because Downtown Boone is such a small area and suggested focusing on preservation. He said why does it have to extend beyond preservation with consideration to scale,

material quality and longevity. He said you can focus on these types of things and not tie the hands of the designer. He said there are not that many historic buildings in the Downtown area.

Mr. Coffey talked about the definition of historic and what does it truly mean. He said if these draft guidelines were in place, it would not be possible to build a church like the one beside Earthfare.

Ms. Virginia Falck, Downtown Boone Development Coordinator said that there are many historic buildings in Downtown Boone but they have inappropriate facades covering the buildings. Mr. Coffey said the facades are inappropriate based on whose judgment.

HPC Chairperson Plaa read from the draft HPC guidelines that addresses new construction. The guidelines said that new construction within historic districts should not seek to duplicate historic buildings in the district or mimic their appearance. He said there is nothing wrong with doing appropriately styled new constructions.

Discussion ensued on existing buildings having inappropriate facades. CAC Chairperson Williams talked about Section Three of the draft guidelines that outlines the preservation and renovation of existing buildings. He said the goal is to preserve the historic buildings.

CAC Chairperson Williams suggested focusing on the content of what is outlined in the draft guidelines and discuss the areas of concern and compromise in one way or the other way on a particular topic.

CAC Chairperson Williams talked about the temporary stop-gap measure expiring in mid-November 2016 for building materials in Downtown Boone in the B-1 zoning district. He talked about having an approved document in place to prevent certain building materials from being used in the future.

Mr. Johnson said the Staff will refer to Article 25.06.04, when they meet with a developer who is proposing to renovate an existing building. He said the Staff depends on the developer to provide to the Staff the information that meets the requirements of the guidelines.

HPC Chairperson Plaa said his concerns in the June 2016 Downtown Appearance Standards draft document were focused on the new construction. He talked about the sentence that stated while new building design is expected to reflect the character of its own time. He said this makes him uncomfortable because it is not the same as it says in the draft HPC design guidelines. He further said the new design should reflect the character of the district.

Discussion ensued on Downtown Boone not having a Historic district. Council Member Teague said if Downtown Boone has a district; the HPC guidelines will regulate that district. She said if Downtown Boone does not have a district the HPC guidelines dictate what is going to happen in the district. Mr. Bailey said unless we incorporate the guidelines.

Mr. Bailey explained because "historic district" is a very specific term, they decided to call it a historic core.

Mr. Bailey talked about incorporating the direction from Council into the draft design guidelines to have a document for the developers to use on future development. He also noted that there will be some ties to the HPC guidelines in the draft Downtown Appearance Design Standards.

Mr. Bailey talked about the Town adopting the Secretary of State guidelines.

Mr. Bailey pointed out that features like rowed windows and roof treatments that make the historic core are mimicked but not copied. It was noted that copying is not a good thing. Mr. Bailey said the guidelines are proposing a compatible reference to the historic building elements.

Council Member Mizelle talked about the stop-gap measure running out in mid-November 2016 and future developments having to go by the old regulations, if the revised draft guidelines are not in place.

Mr. Bailey noted that King Street has a more traditional feel and Howard Street has a more eclectic feel to it. He pointed out on the colored map that King Street is in the historic core and Howard Street is not in the historic core.

HPC Chairperson Plaag talked about the block between King Street and Howard Street and Water Street being a cohesive entity to the HPC. He noted that on the South side of Howard Street there is not a lot of historic integrity.

HPC Chairperson Plaag talked about the future development of the surface lot at Howard Street and Water Street and King Street being complimentary to the area. Mr. Bailey said the draft design guidelines are proposing to get development closer to the feel of the historic core.

Mr. Johnson talked about allowing flexibility and affordable design. He talked about possibly allowing more contemporary design. HPC Chairperson Plaag said he had no objection to compatible contemporary design in new construction. HPC Chairperson Plaag said he felt this is exactly what should happen with new construction. Mr. Johnson said they do not want to pinpoint what would be allowed in new construction. Mr. Bailey pointed out that this is the difference in the Downtown Historic Core and the Downtown Interface Area. Mr. Bailey further pointed out that the Downtown Interface Area is a buffer between the Downtown Historic Core and the rest of the Town and has more contemporary features than the Downtown Historic Core. Mr. Bailey said this is one of the ways that a transition can be made between these two areas.

HPC Chairperson Plaag suggested making a language change to help reach the common goal of the CAC and the HPC. He suggested changing the language to “although new building design is expected to be compatible to the historic elements of the Downtown Historic Core or Downtown Interface Area at the same time should not mimic or attempt to recreate the appearance of existing Historic buildings”.

Mr. Coffey suggested describing the building design as sympathetic. He said if you say a building design is expected to be complimentary that phrase leads to mimicking. He further talked about the reflection in glass windows in buildings being sympathetic to its surroundings. HPC Chairperson Plaag said he would agree with the idea of sympathetic. He said the phrase “while new building design is expected to reflect the character of its own time” is what makes him feel uncomfortable.

CAC Chairperson Williams said he is hearing a disconnect in the descriptions of the building design. He said he is hearing that it is alright to have a building that reflects a building beside it. And he is hearing that at the same time, it is not alright to have a building that is entirely different from the building beside it.

HPC Chairperson Plaag said a lot of times a building design has a slight setback with an addition or using other cues for the building to say this is not originally a part of a building. He said this is sometimes done by using a slightly different color of brick that signals that area is new.

HPC Chairperson Plaag suggested adding composition as one of the characteristics to the use of construction building materials.

Discussion ensued on affordable building materials. Mr. Johnson said there has been discussion on whether to have wooden windows or vinyl windows in buildings. Mr. Johnson said where do we draw the line with affordability on building materials. He said that the Staff has this discussion with the developers, when they meet with them.

Mr. Coffey said he feels it is a matter of semantics regarding thick or thin stacked stone to be used for building materials. He suggested changing the language to clarify the use of stacked stone.

Discussion ensued on the stone that is on various buildings in the Downtown area. CAC Chairperson Williams talked about getting away from the use of cultured stone. He said that developers will sometimes try to use a least expensive stone, if they can.

Discussion ensued on allowing stacked natural stone. HPC Chairperson Plaag said there is a product that is sold now that is an adhered type product. He said that traditionally building walls would be constructed out of stacked stone. CAC Chairperson Williams suggested changing the language to adhered or cultured stone. Mr. Johnson said he could change the language to prohibit stacked stone or cultured stone and pre-manufactured material types. It was the consensus to allow natural stacked stone as a building material.

HPC Chairperson Plaag talked about Article 25.06.03(2) Architectural Features. He suggested changing the word recreate found in the second sentence to incorporate appropriate historic features.

HPC Chairperson Plaag explained that the draft design standards are to help the Staff get good designs to review for projects. He further explained that the HPC and CAC would be able to look at the proposed design to see if it feels sympathetic.

Ms. Falck noted that there should be firm regulations for new construction on King Street. She also noted that she is not against modern buildings.

Discussion ensued on the approved Marketplace project. Council Member Teague said this project is a perfect example of a historic fit in the Downtown area.

Discussion ensued on distressed lots in Downtown Boone. HPC Chairperson Plaag said that the Marketplace project lot is a distressed lot. He reminded everyone that he did suggest a proposed building design that would have been sympathetic to Downtown Boone for the Marketplace project and still have met the same goals in terms of use.

Discussion ensued on the term abstract reference. Mr. Coffey said this means that you streamline some of the building elements. He talked about literal replication, invention of the same or related style and intention opposition which is the glass façade that reflects the buildings around it.

HPC Chairperson Plaag said there is consensus on the abstract reference and invention with same or related style.

Discussion on the language for the Downtown Historic Core. CAC Chairperson Williams said he felt that the language was not strong enough for a Downtown recreation. He said he felt this could this part could be the abstract reference. He also added that they could use more modern features which would satisfy the developers that want this type of look. He also suggested allowing more flexibility outside of the Downtown Historic Core.

Council Member Mizelle said that some Towns are so strict with their regulations that they have a cookie cutter look.

Mr. Johnson asked about the boundaries of the two zones. Mr. Bailey pointed out that the boundaries that are shown on the colored map are for presentation purposes and they are not the final boundaries. Mr. Johnson pointed out that the CAC had discussed trying to keep the design the same outside the area of the Historic core.

HPC Chairperson Plaa said that he considers from River Street to Queen Street to the north end of Howard Street and Water Street to Appalachian Street to be in the Downtown Historic Core. He also included both the east and west sides of Water Street along with the old jail house and stopping Howard Street. Mr. Bailey asked HPC Chairperson Plaa to write down the street names for the Staff to review.

Discussion ensued on where to allow modern buildings in future growth.

Mr. Bailey said that the Staff can provide some examples at the public hearing on the boundaries of the two zones. He noted that he has not seen the information in the report that HPC Chairperson Plaa is working on. He noted that he is trying to get his draft report to the HPC for their review by December 2016.

Mr. Bailey asked the Council if they were alright with some of the principles presented at this workshop. Mayor Brantz agreed that Staff could draft language that might give the Council some options to choose from to help make decisions on the boundaries of the two zones.

Mr. Bailey said there will be further discussion on this topic at the November 2016 Planning Retreat.

Mr. Bailey explained that the idea is for the public to feel like they are still in the Downtown Interface Area even though, they may not be in the Downtown Historic Core.

Council Member Mizelle asked Mr. Bailey to explain the process when a Downtown area becomes a historic district. Mr. Bailey said it is an overlay that sits on top of the existing zoning. He said we might want to consider altering the Downtown Historic Core at some point, when structuring it.

Ms. Jane Shook, Planning Supervisor said that direction is needed on the boundaries of the Downtown Interface Area and what those boundaries should be.

Mr. Bailey recommended limiting the Downtown Interface Area to Greasy Corner, if the Council considers doing a rezoning rather than an overlay district. He further explained that either one of these works. He noted that the overlay district is more challenging and usually used in very specific situations. Mr. Bailey said he is more comfortable with a zoning district than an overlay district.

Council Member Teague and Council Member Clawson said they would like to see what the rezoning would include.

Mr. Bailey said there are two mechanisms. There is the adoption of the standards and either the adoption of an overlay district or the rezoning of a property. He said there is a choice on how they are enacted.

It was the consensus of the Council for Staff to make the following changes to the draft Downtown Appearance Design Standards and provide the revised draft standards to the Council at the November 2016 public hearing.

The following changes were made to the draft guidelines:

1. Article 25.06.03 under the Design Standard for New Construction, "while new building design must be sympathetic to existing buildings and the Historic Core".

2. Article 25.06.03(A)(2) under Architectural Features “when possible, incorporate appropriate historic features”.
3. Article 25.06.03(A)(3)(b)(b) under Façade Materials “adhered and pre-manufactured stone

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Brantz adjourned the workshop at 8:02 p.m.

Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary

Rennie Brantz, Mayor