



**Town of Boone
Historic Preservation Commission
Regular Meeting
3:00 PM, July 7, 2026
Town of Boone Planning & Inspections
680 West King Street, Suite C**

1. The public may attend the meeting in person at the Planning and Inspections Conference Room at 680 West King Street, Suite C, or online via WebEx, a video conferencing software. Public Comment: To give public comment, you should appear in person at the physical location of this meeting. Persons who attend the meeting remotely via WebEx may be permitted to speak during public comment but are not assured of that opportunity. WebEx Participation: To join online or by phone, email Planning and Inspections at planning@boonenc.gov or call 828-268-6960, and you will receive an email invitation. Requests must be submitted no later than one hour before the meeting begins.
2. Call to Order
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Public Comment
5. Approval of Meeting Minutes
 - A. June 2, 2026, HPC Advisory Meeting Minutes
6. Advisory Items for Discussion
 - A. Clawson Burnley Park Interpretative Panel - Project Discussion
7. Other Matters
8. Adjournment

TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
ADVISORY MEETING MINUTES
June 2, 2026, 3:00 pm
Planning & Inspections Department & WebEx Video Conferencing

Historic Preservation Commission Members Present: Vardell Smyth-Chair, Bettie Bond-Vice-Chair, Krystal Carter, and Bennie Gaetano

Town Staff Present: Jessica Mitchell-Advanced Planning Specialist, Virginia Roseman-Council Member Liaison (via WebEx), and David Pedersen-Board Clerk

Call to Order

Chair Smyth called the Boone Historic Preservation Commission meeting, held in the Planning & Inspections Conference Room at 680 West King Street, Suite C, and via WebEx to order at 3:02 pm.

Adoption of Agenda

Commission Member Carter made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Bond, to adopt the agenda as presented.

Vote: Aye – 4
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

Vice-Chair Bond made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Carter, to approve the May 5, 2026, Historic Preservation Commission Advisory meeting minutes.

Vote: Aye – 4
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Work Plan Recap

Ms. Mitchell opened discussion of a recap of the HPC Advisory Work Plan FY2026-2027, displaying it on the screen. She stated that the HPC had already met the CLG (Certified Local Government) training requirements for the year by attending the in-person training in Hickory, NC.

She reiterated that the Stoneman's Raid item on the work plan had been completed, finalized with the unveiling ceremony. She informed HPC that the items assigned to herself, Appendix D Revisions and the Jones House Historic Landmark Designation, were currently pending. She stated that the Boone/Kraut Creek Marker or Watauga Kraut Factory item was in progress, with Town Council having approved the marker text; additionally, the fabrication company (Sewah Studios) has the marker information provided by Ms. Mitchell. She stated that the Ice House Alley Marker was pending work from former HPC Chair and Town Council member, Dr. Eric Plaag, noting a possibility of an update by the end of the year. For the Historic District Light Pole Banners item, Ms. Mitchell stated that with the newly adopted Town Branding, this item may be budget dependent, and that she would inquire about this considering Town Council's current review of the budget. She stated that the Tobacco Industry Marker would come after finalization of the currently pending projects. She stated that the rest of the items were still on hold.

Vice-Chair Bond inquired specifically about the status of the Boone Cemetery Survey, with Ms. Mitchell answering that the project would be dependent on the review and consolidation of resources.

Chair Smyth inquired to confirm whether Boone/Kraut Creek was out of the purview of the HPC for the present, which Ms. Mitchell confirmed, adding that she would provide updates when available. Additionally, once the marker was ready for an unveiling ceremony, then the HPC would be involved.

Vice-Chair Bond then inquired specifically about the Winklers Creek Dam Historic Marker, with Ms. Mitchell responding that it was on hold until Town Council moves forward with that site.

Council Member Gaetano arrived at 3:18 pm.

Public Comment

Jae Furman, of 767 Whispering Hills Rd. in Boone was introduced for Public Comment. Mr. Furman stated that he had recently moved to Boone with the goal of restarting the High Country chapter of the Friends of the Blue Ridge. He stated that the group's goal is to provide assistance with relevant local public projects which might include Habitat Restoration, pollinator garden installation, historic site restoration, or public programming. He spoke further, giving example of previously completed projects and local projects they could be potentially involved with.

Council Member Liaison Roseman joined the meeting at 3:18 pm.

The HPC thanked Mr. Furman for his introduction and information, and noted that Town Council would have to approve collaboration on projects. Ms. Mitchell also encouraged him to seek a Town Council requested appearance through the Town Clerk's office or speak at the upcoming Town Council meeting on June 10, 2026. The HPC and Ms. Mitchell provided Mr. Furman with other relevant contacts in the Town of Boone, many of whom he had previously introduced himself to. Ms. Mitchell and the HPC reiterated their thanks for Mr. Furman's time and information.

Mr. Furman left the meeting at 3:28 pm.

Ms. Mitchell briefly summarized the meeting so far for Commission Member Gaetano and Council Member Liaison Roseman.

Clawson Burnley Park Interpretive Panel – Project Introduction

Ms. Mitchell opened the topic by pointing out that research which would help with creating the panel was included in the HPC's meeting packet. She stated that Town Council had given direction for the HPC to create a panel that would introduce the two mayors, describe why the park is named for them, and outline their accomplishments. She stated that a starting point would be the "Hall of Fame Reports" from the Watauga Historical Society, as presented in the packet and available online.

Chair Smyth inquired whether there was any marker guidance yet, such as word count or size. Ms. Mitchell replied that the dimensions would be the same as the previous (Stoneman's Raid and Boone Cemetery) marker panels. She noted that word counts for those panels were 278 (Stoneman's Raid), 215 (Boone Cemetery panel at the gate entrance), and 245 (Boone Cemetery panel inside at the crest) words, so a similar word count with graphics/photos would likely be appropriate. The HPC agreed that this research was sufficient for the time being.

Certified Local Government Federal Year 2024-2025 Reporting

Ms. Mitchell introduced this topic by directing the HPC to packet page 15, which contained the CLG letter from the NC State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). She noted for the HPC that it is the review letter affirming CLG status.

Certified Local Government Training Recap and Discussion

Ms. Mitchell opened this topic for discussion with the HPC regarding the in-person training in Hickory, NC. Chair Smyth noted that he felt much of the information wasn't new, but there were refined takes and other perspectives on said information. Commission Member Gaetano noted the value of hearing about processes from other municipalities.

Ms. Mitchell noted the "Community Engagement" session, stating that she thought it provided good ideas for the HPC in the future, specifically mentioning the example of a public scanning day held by the City of Greensboro, NC. The HPC discussed the details of the idea and agreed it could be a valuable future opportunity for community engagement in Boone - both with the Town HPC and other community partners - providing value to the public, who might not have the opportunity otherwise. Commission Member Carter suggested that connecting with Mark Coltrain at Appalachian State University, who may have insights and resources to provide.

Ms. Mitchell noted a few more details about the CLG event, discussing helpful aspects/highlights of some of the specific sessions. She specifically stated that she felt the idea of a sample Certificate of Appropriateness case could be useful for future Board Orientations. The HPC agreed and discussed the session briefly.

Ms. Mitchell brought up a previous question from Chair Smyth regarding why the Town of Boone wasn't a nationally registered Historic District. She informed the HPC that according to SHPO, it was due to Boone not having enough structures in original condition to qualify.

Within this discussion, Ms. Mitchell also informed the HPC that the Jones House roof replacement was permitted and could be expected soon.

Updates on Watauga Kraut Factory Marker

This item was previously discussed under the HPC Work Plan Recap.

Statement of Conformity Report

Ms. Mitchell opened this item by directing the HPC to Packet page 17, which contained the SOC Report. There was only one item - 222 Howard St - which had already been approved by Town Staff and was underway. She stated it was a like-for-like replacement of a non-visible portion of roof, including skylight installation and other small elements.

Ms. Mitchell provided an update on the 680 W King St (Boone Post Office/Planning & Inspections Office) HVAC work, noting that installation was complete but painting of the installed gas line conduit was pending.

Other Matters

Chair Smyth noted to the HPC that it was Commission Member Carter's final meeting with the HPC, and thanked her for her time and work.

Vice Chair Bond inquired to confirm the date of the next meeting was July 7, 2026. Ms. Mitchell confirmed and reminded the HPC that there would be no June Quasi-Judicial meeting. The HPC discussed upcoming local events before adjournment.

Ms. Mitchell encouraged the HPC to send any material related to the Clawson-Burnley Park panel to her for the next meeting.

Adjournment

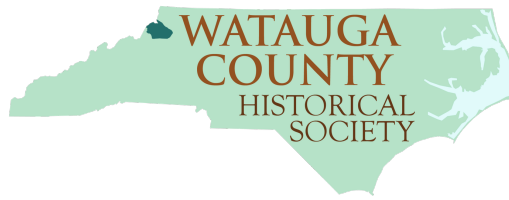
Commission Member Carter made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Gaetano, to adjourn the meeting at 4:03 pm.

Vote: Aye – 4
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Vardell Smyth-Chair

David Pedersen, Board Clerk



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WCHS Announces Velma Rose Combs Burnley as Final 2022 Inductee to the WCHS Hall of Fame

December 28, 2022



Velma Burnley is seen here working at the Northwestern Bank in 1952. Image courtesy of Sarah Lynn Spencer and the Palmer Blair Collection, Digital Watauga Project

December 27, 2022

As part of ongoing activities associated with the Boone 150 celebrations in 2022, marking the 150th anniversary of Boone's official incorporation as a town on January 23, 1872, the Watauga County Historical Society (WCHS) has established the Watauga County Historical Society Hall of Fame. Throughout 2022, WCHS has named twelve individuals or groups—one each month—as members of the inaugural class of the WCHS Hall of Fame. For the month of December 2022, the WCHS is delighted to announce that Velma Rose Combs Burnley (1921-2019) has been named as the final inductee of this inaugural class of the WCHS Hall of Fame.

Throughout the 150 years of Boone's rich history, the town has been home to numerous influential women. From Constance Stallings to Roberta Jackson, these women helped shape the place we call home. One of the most significant among them is no doubt Boone's first female mayor, Velma Burnley (1921-2019).

Velma Burnley was born on November 14, 1921, in Vilas, NC, to Rose and Charley Combs. After an early graduation at the age of 16 from Cove Creek High School, Velma moved to Charlotte and attended Queens University, then known as Queens College, and later returned to Boone, where she worked at Northwestern Bank on King Street, in the Watauga County Bank building. Working in our downtown's heart, her position at the bank allowed her to get to know many of the townspeople and establish relationships as well as a reputation for being a kind yet diligent worker. One follower of Digital Watauga's Facebook page recently commented on a picture of Velma, saying, "I enjoyed working beside Velma at Northwestern Bank in Boone in the 1970's. She was a very kind and professional mentor." Velma was also elected as the first woman vice president of Northwestern Bank, making it clear that she had a penchant for success and breaking glass ceilings.



Burnley was one of more than a dozen nominees for Centennial Queen during the 1949 Watauga County Centennial festivities. She is standing fifth from right in this image by Palmer Blair showing the various Centennial Queen nominees. Image courtesy of the Von and Mickey Hagaman Collection, Digital Watauga Project.

Active in the community throughout her life, Velma served on leadership boards of various organizations, including the Rural Economic Development Division, and was only the second woman to be elected as

president of the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce. In the 1950s, the *Watauga Democrat* made several mentions of the Boone Credit Women's Breakfast Club, where Velma served as president. The Credit Women's Breakfast Club was created in 1930, in Portland, Oregon, to form a cohesive group of women who were in the retail credit profession. With the goal of personal and professional development, chapters quickly spread throughout the country and internationally.

In 1987, Velma was elected to Boone Town Council, and two short years later was elected as the first woman mayor of the town. Crediting her successful political career to her experience getting to know Boone's people through her position at Northwestern Bank, she remained in her role as mayor until 2005. During her tenure as mayor, Velma oversaw a time in Boone's history that was marked by economic vitality. There's little doubt that her background as a leader of Northwestern Bank made her uniquely equipped to help foster this prosperous time. Her colleague and friend Lorretta Clawson—who also served as Boone mayor from 2005-2013, as well as many years on Town Council—remembers Velma Burnley as a “lovely lady, who led Boone during a time of tremendous growth,” and paved the way for other female leaders. Loretta fondly remembers many ribbon-cutting ceremonies with Velma and trips to Raleigh for meetings with the North Carolina League of Municipalities (a member-driven organization that is composed of representatives from various cities and towns in the state, dedicated to improving the lives of their citizens). Loretta stated that she and Velma were always warmly welcomed at these gatherings, since Boone was well-known throughout the state and admired for its development and beautiful location in the mountains.

In addition to her focus on the economic development of Boone, she also channeled energy to support causes rooted in compassion. Recognizing the need for an animal shelter in the area, Velma worked alongside Rachel Rivers Coffey and veterinarian Dr. Jack Martin to establish the Watauga Humane Society, with Velma serving as its first president. She also focused on establishing and protecting green spaces in Boone. Clawson-Burnley Park was opened and dedicated to Loretta Clawson and Velma Burnley in 2010, after they worked together to establish and protect this space at the Greenway. Not only a location for enjoying recreation and natural beauty, the wetlands at the park also provide vital ecological services, including filtering runoff water from impervious surfaces before returning to the South Fork of the New River. Burnley was also an ardent public library supporter. As Velma's daughter Lynn Kellem described in her obituary, “She was an avid reader, checking out four or five books from the library, reading them, returning them the next week.” A photograph of Velma as mayor still hangs in the southwestern corner of the Watauga County Public Library. It is also clear that Velma was a lover of the arts and worked closely with Appalachian State University, serving on advisory boards for both the Appalachian Summer Festival and the Turchin Center for the Visual Arts. She was awarded honorary alumni status from the University in 2006.



Burnley can be seen at the center of this image by Jamey Fletcher as she is sworn in with Clyde Greene and Jim Smith at the Boone Council Chambers by Judge Charles Lamm, likely in the late 1980s. Image courtesy of the Historic Boone Collection, Digital Watauga Project.

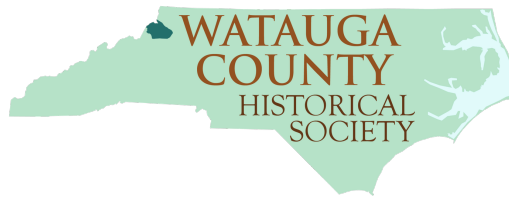
When we think of a life well lived and a legacy that touches so many facets of a community, Velma Burnley serves as a shining example of what one person can accomplish to benefit the lives of others, long after her own came to an end. Always lighting the torch for those who followed her, we can think of no better inductee than Velma Burnley to help lead us into the new year! The WCHS is delighted to honor Velma Rose Combs Burnley for her important contributions to Boone and Watauga County's social, educational, and cultural history.

The WCHS Hall of Fame honors individuals, either living or dead, who have made significant and lasting contributions to Watauga County's history and/or literature, including those whose efforts have been essential to the preservation of Watauga County's history and/or literature. Honorees need not have been residents of Watauga County. The WCHS is particularly interested in honoring individuals who meet the above criteria but who may have been overlooked in traditional accounts of Watauga County's history and literature, including women and people of color. Selections for this inaugural class were made from nominations submitted by members of the Digital Watauga Project Committee (DWPC) of WCHS. Beginning in 2023, the WCHS will also consider nominations from members of the public, which in turn will be evaluated by the DWPC.

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WCHS Announces Loretta Guy Clawson as 2025 Inductee to WCHS Hall of Fame

December 11, 2025



Loretta Guy Clawson, image courtesy of the Town of Boone.

Ralph Lentz, II, and Eric Plaag
December 11, 2025

The Watauga County Historical Society (WCHS) continues to expand its roster of Hall of Fame inductees for the year 2025, building on an initiative started in 2022 as part of Boone's 150th anniversary celebrations. WCHS is delighted to announce that Loretta Carolyn Guy Clawson (b. 1944) has been selected as the second of its two inductees for 2025.

An eighth-generation resident of the High Country born in the Old Beech Mountain community to Enoch and Viola Ward Guy, Loretta attended Beech Mountain Elementary School before enduring daily school bus rides, one hour each way, to complete her secondary education at Cranberry High School. The year before starting high school, she met her future husband, L. D. Clawson, when he was visiting from Poga, Tennessee, as part of a church function. Loretta graduated high school in 1963, and she and L. D. married in 1964. After a brief stint in Lexington, NC, they moved to Boone in 1966, where they raised their two children—Larry Dean and Sheri Lea—and still live today.

Loretta began her working career in Boone as a sewing room supervisor at the Shadowline factory, worked briefly for Ray's King Burgers, then took a job in the Clerk of Superior Court's office as assistant clerk for four years. As a result of the relationships built in this position, including campaign work for then-Clerk of Court John T. Bingham, Loretta realigned her political allegiances with the Democratic Party, starting a decades-long commitment to party volunteer work and leadership. During this time she also completed some college work and earned a real estate broker license. In 1981, she took a job working for 20 years at the North Carolina Department of Transportation as an administrative assistant for the Watauga County Bridge Department.

In 1997, Loretta was elected to the Boone Town Council, where she served until 2005, when she was elected as Boone's second woman mayor. She served as mayor until 2013, retired for a year and half, then returned to the Boone Town Council, where she was re-elected to another term and served as mayor pro tempore until her final retirement from politics in 2021. During her political career, she served on several town boards, including the town's Community Appearance Commission, the Tree Board, and the Historic Preservation Commission.

As Mayor, Loretta worked with the chairwoman of Boone's Historic Preservation Committee, Bettie Bond, to enable the Town to purchase and successfully preserve the historic Downtown Boone US Post Office on King Street. In 2011, she also advocated for the Town's purchase of the Appalachian Theater, which was later sold to the non-profit Appalachian Theatre of the High Country organization that has restored it and made it the gem of Downtown Boone. Loretta also proposed the resolution for Doc Watson History Day in the Town of Boone. Loretta counts her strong support for steep slope and viewshed regulations as two of her most important, long-term legislative accomplishments on behalf of the community. She was also instrumental in securing neighborhood protections and passage of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan during her tenure in office.

In addition, as Mayor, Loretta established the water-conservation slogan "Every Drop Counts," and created the "Mayor's Tree Fund," which facilitated the Town of Boone being named a "Tree City USA." She traveled to Washington, DC, and Raleigh to advocate for a new water-intake system to prevent the town from running out of water. In 2010, Loretta received a letter from First Lady Michelle Obama congratulating Boone for being designated a "Preserve America Community." In 2012, NC Secretary of State Elaine Marshall came to Boone to induct Loretta into the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, since 1963 North Carolina's highest civilian award.

Since coming to Boone, Loretta has also been a supporter of the Southern Appalachian Historical Association, the production foundation behind *Horn in the West*, one of North Carolina's longest-running outdoor historic dramas. She currently serves as an at large member of SAHA's board of directors. Loretta also continues to actively participate in Boone and Watauga County's preservation of its rich history, serving on the Cultural Resources Board for the Town of Boone and as a proud member of the Daniel Boone Chapter of the Daughters

of the American Revolution. When asked about the inspiration behind her years of public service to her town, county, and state, she replied, "The people needed a voice."

In light of Loretta Guy Clawson's remarkable role in shaping the community and political landscape of Boone and Watauga County during her lifetime, including her staunch advocacy for the preservation of Boone's natural environment and rich local history, we are delighted to honor her with a well-earned spot in WCHS's Hall of Fame for 2025.

The WCHS Hall of Fame honors individuals, either living or dead, who have made significant and lasting contributions to Watauga County's history and/or literature, including those whose efforts have been essential to the preservation of Watauga County's history and/or literature. Honorees need not have been residents of Watauga County. The WCHS is particularly interested in honoring individuals who meet the above criteria but who may have been overlooked in traditional accounts of Watauga County's history and literature, including women and people of color. Selections for this year's class were made from nominations submitted by members of the Digital Watauga Project Committee (DWPC) of the WCHS as well as the public.

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