TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
ADVISORY MEETING MINUTES
October 7, 2025, 3:00 p.m.
Planning & Inspections Department & WebEx Video Conferencing

Historic Preservation Commission Members Present: Vardell Smyth-Chair, Krystal Carter, Bennie Gaetano, and Melody Oxendine

Historic Preservation Commission Members Absent: Bettie Bond-Vice Chair

Council Liaison Present: Virginia Roseman (via WebEx)

Town Staff Present: Jessica Mitchell-Advanced Planning Specialist, Dale Presnell-Human Resources Director/Interim Town Manager (via WebEx)

Call to Order

Chair Smyth called the Boone Historic Preservation Commission meeting held in the Planning & Inspections Conference Room at 680 West King Street and via WebEx to order at 3:01 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

Commission Member Carter made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Gaetano, to adopt the agenda.

Vote: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Bond)

The motion passed.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Approval of Minutes

Commission Member Gaetano made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Carter, to approve the August 12, 2025, Historic Preservation Commission Quasi-Judicial meeting minutes and the September 2, 2025, Historic Preservation Commission Advisory meeting minutes.

Vote: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Bond)

The motion passed.

Approval of Written Decision

Jessica Mitchell, Advanced Planning Specialist, provided a brief explanation and a reminder to the newest members about the Commission's role in reviewing written decisions. Commission Member Carter made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Oxendine, to approve the Written Decision for Cases A25-0195 Rivers House – Bathroom Renovation, Case A25-0466 Speckled Trout Outfitters – New Stairs, and Case A25-0482 Qualls Block – Waterproofing.

Vote: Aye – 4

Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Bond)

The motion passed.

Discussion of Revised Stoneman's Raid Interpretative Panel Text

Ms. Mitchell opened this topic, explaining that this latest version reflects suggestions by Town Attorney Meade. She provided direction to members that after today's discussion, this text can be sent to the Civil War Trails (CWT) program for their review, and that she anticipates a subsequent update to HPC before sharing with Town Council. After Town Council review, this project would move on to the next phase with CWT for panel design.

She introduced the material in the packet, noting specifically the changes to the references to the "Home Guard" and "Kirk's Raiders." She reminded the Commission that previous CWT reviews had both instances of referring to Colonel George Kirk and Kirk's Raiders. Discussion ensued among members on these two specific comments. Chair Smyth noted that the command was referred to as "Kirk's Raiders," and members agreed to keep that reference in the text.

Chair Smyth requested to add a comma in the last sentence of the second paragraph for it to read: "Priority was placed on destroying rail lines and materiel that could be used by the retreating Confederate Army, and avoiding battle."

Discussion continued that the reference to the Home Guard needed to remain. Members agreed to Ms. Meade's suggestions to spell out the military titles throughout the text. Ms. Mitchell shared the text on the screen for the members to discuss the suggested changes. The suggested change of "Union cavalry" in paragraph three was accepted by members. Members discussed the suggestions for references to the Home Guard in paragraphs three and four. Chair Smyth noted that the text should still mention that it was the "Home Guard," and that the suggestion of adding "Confederate" was reasonable. He added that adding "Confederate" may be helpful to readers. Then, members discussed the reference to "Kirk's Raiders" and whether to keep it in the text. As Ms. Mitchell shared this on the screen, members discussed these changes to where the text reads as follows: (changes discussed in the meeting are bolded)

Stoneman's Raid

"The Fight Got Real Hot"

Campaign Banner [in red bar] – Stoneman's Raid

On the morning of March 28, 1865, Union cavalry under **Major** Myles Keogh rode into Boone on the road to your left, surprising about 100 Confederate Home Guard members who had gathered to drill near the courthouse, then located a short distance north of here.

Keogh's detachment was the vanguard of Union **General** George Stoneman's 6,000-man cavalry command ordered into Virginia and North Carolina to "dismantle the country." Priority was placed on destroying rail lines and materiel that could be used by the retreating Confederate **Army, and** avoiding battle.

As Keogh's **Union calvary** approached, shots rang **out and** some of the **Confederate Home Guard** fell back to the home of James W. Councill, which stood to your right. According to one account, Mrs. Councill, hearing the noise, stepped outdoors with her child in her arms – but hurried back inside after the house was struck by a volley of gunfire.

"The fight got real hot," Sheriff A.J. McBride, one of the **Home Guard**, recalled. The Union cavalry charged, sending the defenders fleeing up the slopes of Howard's Knob.

Union cavalry poured into town for the rest of the **day and General** Stoneman requisitioned the Councill house for his headquarters. Stoneman and most of his force left Boone the next day.

Beginning April 6, **Colonel** George W. Kirk's **Union troops – the Second and Third North Carolina Mounted Infantry, "Kirk's Raiders" –** occupied Boone for several weeks, blockading major routes through the mountains. At least 13 Union loyalists from Watauga County served in the regiments that occupied Boone, and another 5 volunteered with Union forces after Boone's occupation.

Both Union and Confederate soldiers are interred in the nearby Boone Cemetery.

There was consensus among members of the text as discussed. Ms. Mitchell shared that she would forward this revised text to the CWT program for review.

Review Boone/Kraut Creek Marker Draft Report

Ms. Mitchell opened the discussion on this topic with a recap of the progress from the September 2, 2025, Advisory meeting. She reminded members that the previous discussion was to continue researching and for Commission Member Oxendine to make the grammatical changes as shared previously. Ms. Mitchell also noted that while it was not within the published draft, Commission Member Oxendine had addressed the Digital Watauga citation for the image used in the report (packet page 31, report page 6) and the reference about the donations for the Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture (packet page 35, report page 10). She also discussed the previous suggestion to check the Watauga Democrat archives for any additional information.

More specifically, Ms. Mitchell provided that since this marker started with the draft provided by Dr. Deathridge's class at App State, the Commission's task is to carefully review the report for accuracy, checking the referenced citations. From previous discussions, Ms. Mitchell added that, for now, to hold on to the idea of conducting oral interviews, and to focus on document-based research. Before Commission members began their discussion, she reminded them that other members could assist Commission Member Oxendine with the report.

Discussion began with a review of the proposed draft marker text on packet pages 35 and 36. Chair Smyth mentioned that there is room to put more information in the report than in the marker text. Ms. Mitchell then clarified that the marker text should focus on the key points, whereas the marker report can include any other information for anyone reading the marker to find answers to their questions.

Ms. Mitchell also noted the word counts of the existing markers as: the Councill's Store marker, 168 words; Hayes-Bryan-Greene Cemetery marker, 151 words; the Junaluska Community marker, 149 words; the 1940 Flood marker, 165 words; and the Ginseng Marker as part of the North Carolina Highway marker program, 23 words. Chair Smyth mentioned that the maximum number of words should be 170 words for the Boone/Kraut Creek marker, and Ms. Mitchell suggested 170 at the absolute most with a focus more between 150-165 words.

Ms. Mitchell referenced that Commission Member Carter had provided additional research for this topic beginning on packet page 59. Commission Member Carter then explained a resource she found from App State's Library of the Doris Stam Collection, which includes kraut can labels and deeds to the kraut factory. She added that there were deeds and labels for the North State Canning Company. Chair Smyth and Commission Member Carter discussed how this was a local family's collection that covers from 1867 to 2007.

Chair Smyth returned to the topic of what goes into the historical marker, explaining that he explored resources, including the National Park Service guidance on wayside markers. He then identified that the marker needed to explain why this would be relevant to anyone and what elements readers would care about, which he added are already mostly addressed. He added that some technical information needed to be decided, including when the operation was "North State Canning Company," and when it was "North State Foods," along with the corresponding dates.

Discussion continued that the marker text should include that it was locally referred to as "Kraut Creek" and address the pollution sensitively, with the suggestion of using the term "runoff." Members discussed the importance of letting readers know that cabbage was grown here, since most visitors did not realize it.

Discussion returned to the dates of North State Canning Company's operation and whether the marker should list the one company name with the associated dates of 1923 through 1981. Although the company name changed three times, the marker text would be limited to include those three company names.

Town Council Liaison Roseman joined the meeting at approximately 3:30 pm.

During this item's discussion, Ms. Mitchell called on Council Liaison Roseman if she had any questions. Ms. Mitchell summarized the conversation of Stoneman's Raid, showing Council Liaison Roseman the discussed changes. Council Liaison Roseman asked when this would come before Town Council, and Ms. Mitchell stated that she hoped it would be before the end of the year. Council Liaison Roseman then asked if it was possible for the Stoneman's Raid Interpretative Panel to be completed in early 2026 to coincide with the 250th anniversary celebrations. Ms. Mitchell said she would ask CWT about the timing of this project.

The discussion returned to the Boone/Kraut Creek marker report. Chair Smyth mentioned that it would be difficult to track those who operated the facility, as it changed ownership, but that it should include the names of those who were big in the production, like John B. Steele and H. Neal Blair.

Chair Smyth noted that an interesting fact to add to the marker would be the amount of cabbage produced, since the amount of money earned then will not reflect current dollar amounts. Members added that it would be interesting to include the fact that the operations changed to a candy company run by Nina and Tom Ennis because it is intriguing.

Chair Smyth then also questioned if the Blue Ridge Farmers Association is still active. Ms. Mitchell added that it would be worth checking into, as a quick search indicates the information is unclear. A suggestion was to add "former" before that reference in the marker text if it was not currently active.

Chair Smyth returned to the idea of including the amount of cabbage produced, in tons, and also noted that operations were ranked 32nd in the nation (packet page 35, report page 10), and that operations were important to the Southeast United States. He questioned where the farthest place the cabbage was shipped. He suggested that adding a fact like that would give readers an idea of the scope and magnitude, and how much economic influence cabbage production had on the area. He also asked how many farmers were involved in the height of the operations.

Commission Member Gaetano added to the conversation that if she were reading the marker, she would want to know if cabbage is still being produced now, and if so, who is making and where? And, how much do we export now if there is still a market for it?

Chair Smyth added that, to end the marker, the text should reference about the production's closure, the end of decades of crop production, and the loss of that manufacturing in the area.

Ms. Mitchell then asked the question to Chair Smyth, based on his comments, if he was interested in assisting Commission Member Oxendine on the marker text. Chair Smyth and Commission Member Oxendine agreed. Ms. Mitchell added it would still be open for the other members to add research to future conversations.

There was consensus among the Commission for Chair Smyth and Commission Member Oxendine to work on this topic.

Other Matters

Ms. Mitchell referred to the Statements of Conformity report presented in the packet (packet page 71) and noted that both are for installation of signs.

Ms. Mitchell then announced that there would be further information following the upcoming Town Council meeting, and that the trail at the R.L. Clay (Rivers) House would have a groundbreaking ceremony scheduled for November 7, 2025, at 4 pm, with limited on-site parking and a shuttle available.

Then, Ms. Mitchell announced that Town offices would be closed on Tuesday, November 11, 2025, which conflicts with the scheduled quasi-judicial meeting for November. She asked members if they were available for Tuesday, November 18, 2025. Chair Smyth and Commission Member Gaetano confirmed their availability; Commission Members Carter and Oxendine will confirm their availability with Ms. Mitchell via email.

Ms. Mitchell concluded Other Matters by reminding members that there would be an Advisory meeting on Tuesday, November 4, 2025.

Adjournment

Commission Member Oxendine made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Gaetano, to adjourn the meeting at 4:09 p.m.

Vote: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Bond)

The motion passed.

_____ _____

Vardell Smyth, Chair **Jessica Mitchell, Advanced Planning Specialist**